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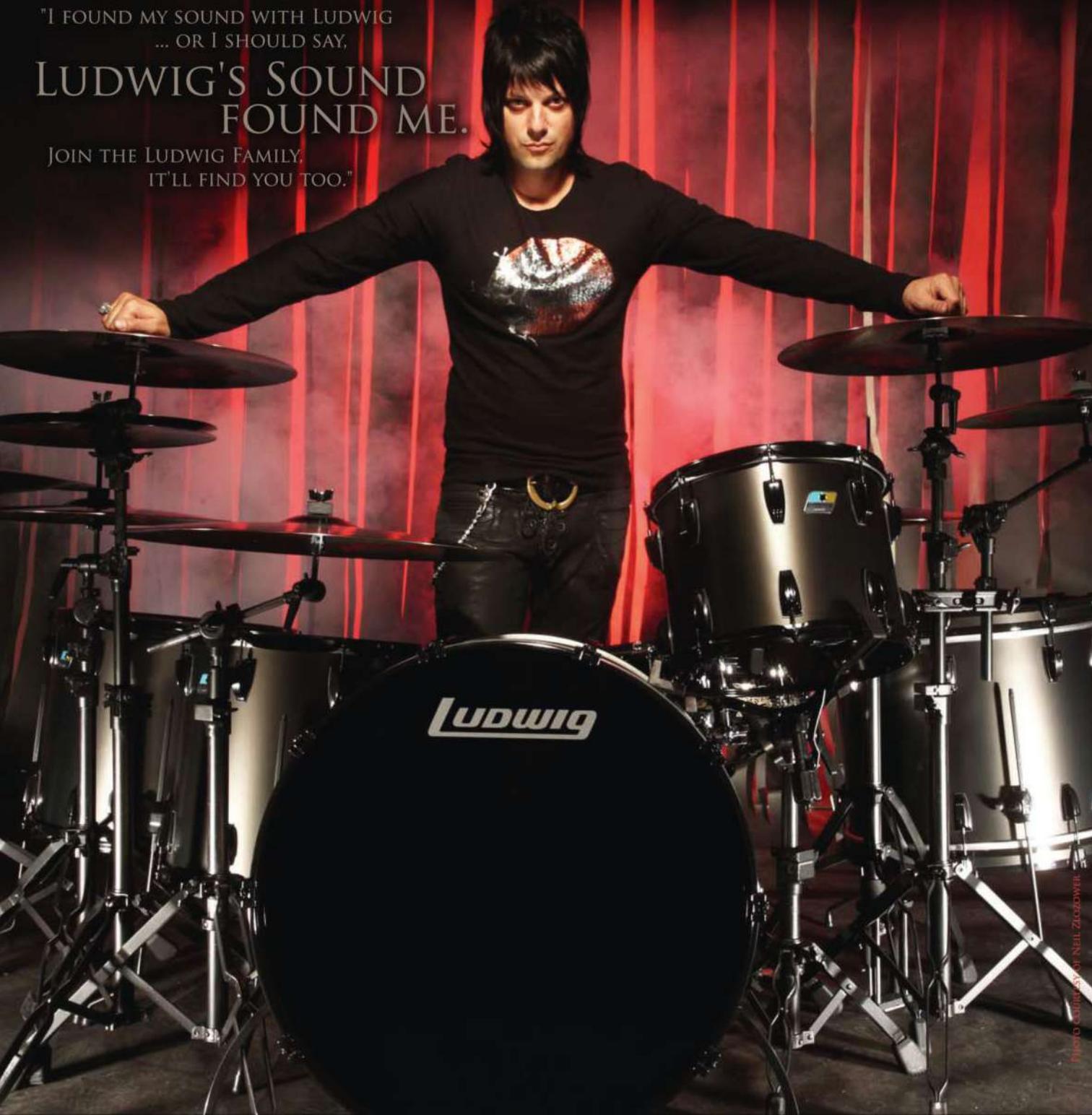
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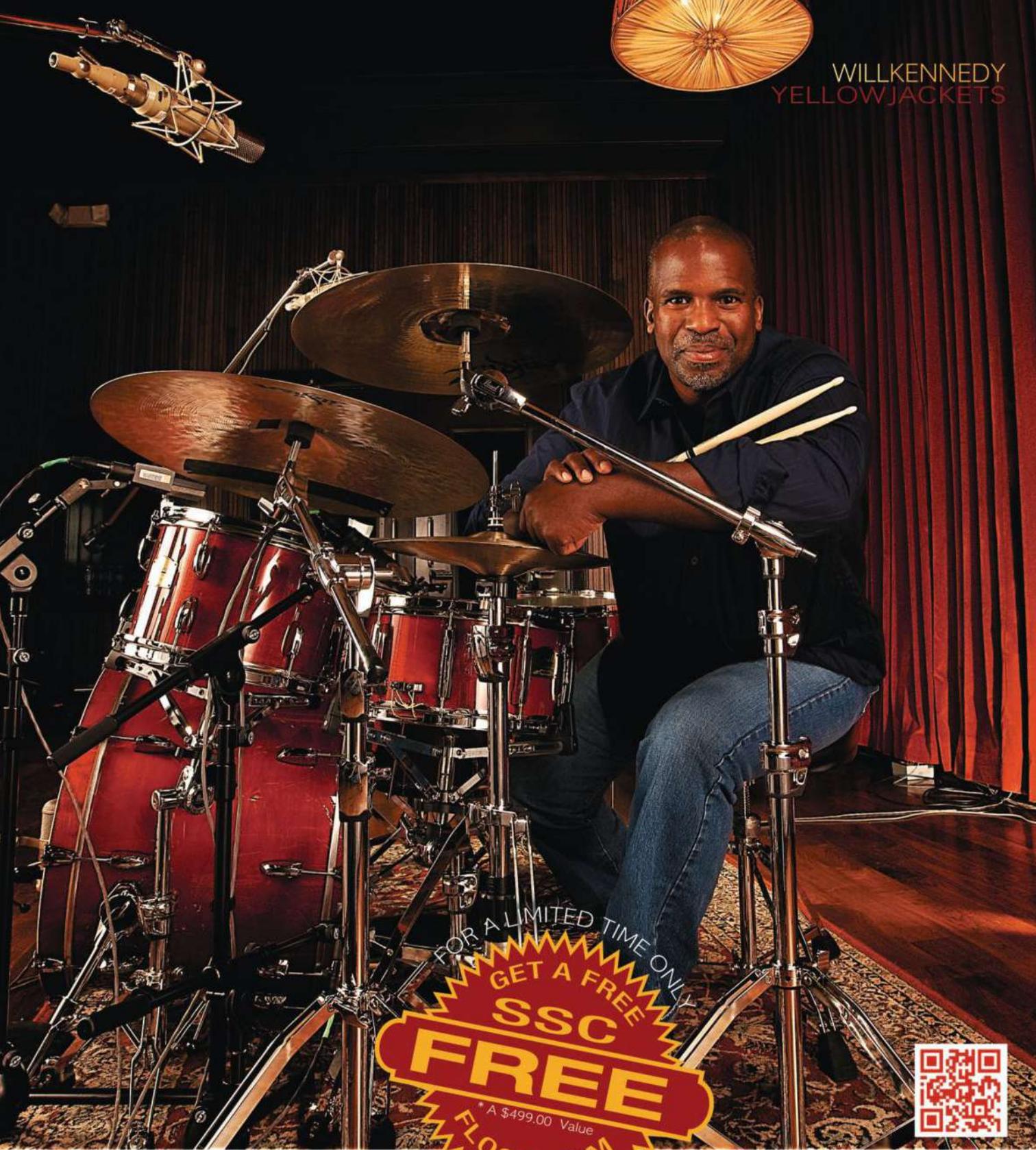
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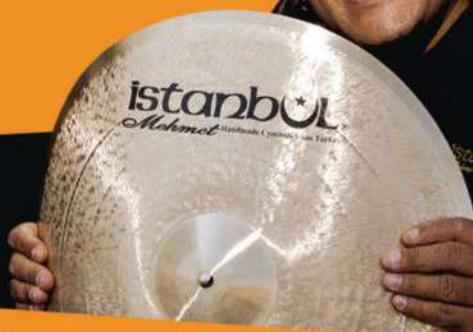
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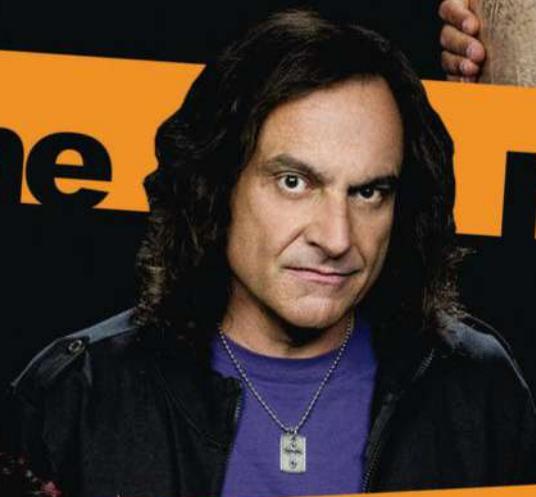
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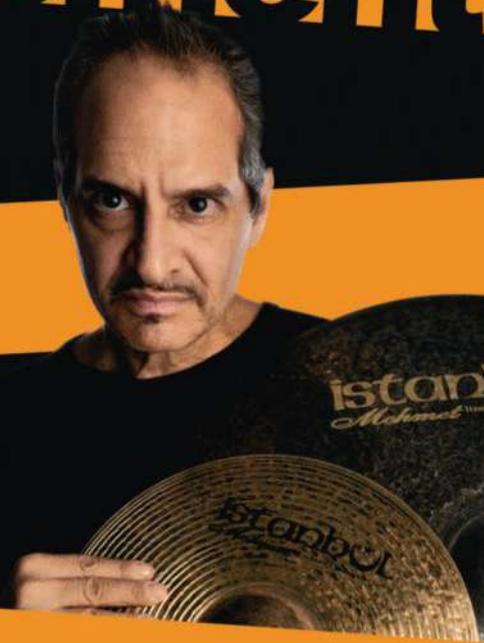


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Hello, Old Friends!

Rob Mazzella



I don't know what sparked it, but at some point this past month I decided to dust off my trusty RealFeel practice pad, grab my fifteen-year-old Vic Firth SD1 General drumsticks, and start shedding some classic rudimental snare solos. I started with Charley Wilcoxon's "Rolling in Rhythm," which I originally learned years ago after discovering that one of my favorite jazz drummers, Philly Joe Jones, spent a lot of time studying the short piece. Then I went further back and rehashed the old military cadence "Three Camps." Neither of these two solos is particularly difficult; if you can play clean double-stroke rolls with accents you basically have all the tools you need to get through them. But what I love about "Rolling in Rhythm" and "Three Camps" is that their simplicity allows you to inject a bit of your own voice, through dynamics, accent/tap contrasts, and tempo. Plus they can really swing. I also find it therapeutic to have something so ingrained in my muscle memory that I can launch right into it without having to think twice. (Interestingly, I still struggle to get all the way through "Rolling in Rhythm" when playing it on drumset. There's clearly more work to be done!)

A couple of nights ago I dug out my copy of Alan Dawson's infamous "Rudimental Ritual" and finally decided to commit the ten-page tour de force to memory. I have the first few pages down, and hopefully by the time you read this I'll have learned the rest. But I'm taking my time, focusing on internalizing each phrase before moving on, and enjoying the way each section feels. I'm in no hurry to cram the entire piece just so I can say I learned it.

That approach didn't work in the past, which is proven by the fact that I spent years memorizing marimba solos and drumset transcriptions, yet I can't recall any of them. I'm being much more deliberate this time around, and my goal is to have whatever I'm practicing become just as ingrained in my subconscious as my favorite drumset bits, like the intro to "Rock and Roll," the drum break in "Funky Drummer," or the opening fill in "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Other snare pieces I want to get to include my high school drumset teacher Mike Shepherd's favorite rudimental solo, "Connecticut Halftime," and the iconic "Tornado," which has some fun back-sticking as well as stretches of exhausting left-hand 16th notes. (Can *anyone* play those suckers consistently at 120 bpm?)

Anyway, I just thought I'd share a bit about my current rhythmic obsessions. It feels good to be practicing snare drum again, even if there isn't any specific reason to be doing so—no recital or contest in the foreseeable future. But it's fun, and that's something that I've realized has been missing in my drumming for a while now.

If you need some ideas on how to get the most out of your own woodshedding, check out MD Education Team member Jeremy Hummel's Concepts column "Maximize Your Practice Time." Jeremy shares a lot of valuable stuff, including differentiating between freestyling and practicing, and setting short- and long-term goals. Then dig on the rest of the issue for even more tips and tricks. Enjoy!



Mike Dawson

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Give It Up for Dad

Whether by coincidence or not, we've received a few letters recently with the loose but unmistakable thread of fatherhood tying them together. Here, we share them with you.

David Ciauro's article "Parenting Perspectives" (July) hit home for me. My dad was a professional drummer before I was born. When I came along, he decided to settle down to a real day gig, often holding down two jobs, but he still played at night locally. He took me to gigs as early as age three or four and let me sit on his trap case behind the drums. He even had a matching "band uniform" made for me. He didn't have much time to spend, so often the gigs were our quality time.

He soon found me at the kitchen table with a pair of his sticks, trying to play along to a rock 'n' roll song. (It was '57, so it was probably Elvis.) He showed me the correct beat and taught me how to listen to the kick and snare and how to keep time, etc. He did not push me to play, but I'd often find an album on the kitchen table, and I found out he went to the local record store and asked what new bands the kids were listening to.

At fifteen I dropped out of school, took his kit (without his permission), and went on the road. While he warned me that an education was important and cautioned me about the "dangers" of being a musician, he never really expressed anger at my choices. He never commented on the fact that I stole his best kit. He occasionally came to my gigs. He never really commented, but I knew he was proud.

He's been dead many years now, and I'm approaching my fifth decade of gigging. I miss him and regret that we didn't have more time together. But proudly displayed on the wall of my recording studio, among the various pictures of bands I was in and pictures of me with famous musicians I opened for over the years, is a picture of my dad behind his drums and me at three sitting on his trap case.

Mike Helgesen

Thank you very much for publishing the series of articles by George Marsh ("Inner Drumming"). My dad and I have been taking lessons from George for over ten years. He has always amazed us with the depth of his knowledge and his abilities as

a player and a teacher. I'm glad the drumming community can benefit from his insights. Inner Drumming works for every style of music. It is fundamental to the drumset and even to life.

A few years ago my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Inner Drumming has been very beneficial for him. It has a therapeutic element that helps slow the effects of this terrible disease. The drums can heal and renew our spirits, even in the face of tremendous adversity.

I will always be grateful for all those years of study with George, who has influenced our lives in transcendent ways. He is a great musician, teacher, thinker, and friend. I look forward to more articles in the future.

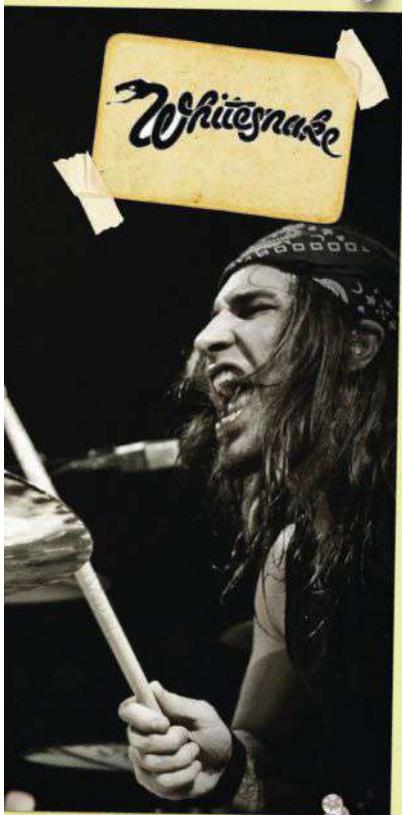
Sean Vallor

Thank you for the mention in the June issue's It's Questionable. I think your magazine did an article on my father, the late Bill Reamer, many years ago. I've inherited his drum- and stick-making business. I can trace it back to 1859—Soistman Bros. in Philadelphia, making drums for the Union Army, then Gus Moeller in New York, then Buck Soistman in Maryland (Rolling Drum Shop), then Bill Reamer starting in 1976 (Drummers Service), and now me (also Drummers Service). I worked with my dad for many years, and since he passed in 2007 I've taken it all over. I moved it from New Holland, Pennsylvania, to Pittsburgh in 2009 so I can work (when possible!) around my main job, which is principal percussionist in the Pittsburgh Symphony.

The drum mentioned by your reader Carlos [as one I'd restored] was an interesting project, and it's a nice collector's instrument. There's no way they could ever get much tension on those heads with that setup, so it's interesting to imagine how the snare sounded in a band.

Andy Reamer, Drummers Service

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STEVEN ADLER

This year brought closure and renewed enthusiasm to the ex-GNR drummer.

Steven Adler has experienced every aspect of rock stardom, from the wild success—and excess—of Guns n’ Roses’ *Appetite for Destruction* to his subsequent drug addiction to his infamous exit from the band. Twenty-five years after his GNR heyday, Adler says that he’s in a better place than ever. This year he joined his former bandmates (well, most of them) to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and he’s started a new band, the eponymously named Adler, featuring vocalist Jacob Bunton, guitarist Lonny Paul, and bassist Johnny Martin.

Of the Hall of Fame induction, Adler says, “It was one of the greatest moments in my life. Why? Because I got to let that go. I have this huge Guns n’ Roses poster at home, from the first time we went to Europe. I have to walk by it because it’s on the way to the bathroom, and forever I would look at it and think, *One day [we’ll all play together again]...I know we can do it.*



Kimberly Annette Field

But now that the Hall of Fame ceremonies are over with, if it was going to happen, it would’ve happened then. When I got home and walked past the poster, for the first time I pointed at it and thought, *That was a great experience. I’m so glad I was part of it.* Instead of wishing, I just appreciated the experience. It was like a billion-pound

weight was off my shoulders.”

As for the motivation behind starting Adler? “Revenge,” Steven says. “But not to hurt anybody. Let people talk shit about you. Put it in their face that you’re the king and that you’re bigger and better. Success is the greatest revenge.”

Billy Brennan

NEWS



Peter Erskine has released a new app. The Erskine Joy Luck PlayAlong offers eleven complete tracks from the album *Joy Luck* by the Peter Erskine New Trio, with a three- or four-instrument “minus” configuration, plus scores, parts, transcriptions, analysis notes, and photos. According to the world-renowned drummer and composer, the app was inspired by the need for a modern jazz-based music-minus-one offering that was not dated sounding, overly complicated, fusion based, too loud, or too pricey. It’s the first of what Erskine hopes will be a series of highly musical yet low-cost apps in the music-minus-one tradition. The app, which is available for iPhone, iPad, and iPod, retails for \$4.99 at the iTunes store.



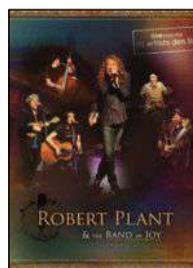
Slipknot cofounder/percussionist **M. Shawn Crahan** has released a book of photography, *The Apocalyptic Nightmare Journey*, which presents 187 manipulated medium-format Polaroids. Metallica’s Lars Ulrich penned the book’s foreword.

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PETE HAYES

The Figgs return with a stick-in-your-head new album and a fresh strategy for touring.

As the Figgs' "new guy," Pete Hayes has been in the band for a mere twenty-three of its twenty-five years. On 2012's *The Day Gravity Stopped*, Hayes powers the trio's sharp, seriously catchy rock 'n' roll with ceaseless energy and a knack for crafting poppy drumming hooks like the machine-gun snare licks he blasts all over "The Lovely Miss Jean."

When Hayes first joined the band, which formed in Saratoga Springs, New York, he and his mates were known for a driving, almost punky time feel as much as for their seasoned songcraft and the complementary lead vocals of guitarist Mike Gent and bassist Pete Donnelly. All of the above still applies, but some of the speed has been tempered over the years, replaced by an even stronger sense of groove. "When a pitcher gets older, he loses his velocity," Hayes says. "He's got to pitch smarter. He's got to locate. I can't

play as fast as I could, but I can conserve my energy. I don't put my cymbals way up high; I keep them low. That whole attitude has helped me a lot." With a laugh, Pete adds, "I also use much lighter gear."

A fine example of smart drumming is *Gravity's* "Do Me Like You Said You Would," where Hayes crafts a Stax-style mid-tempo soul beat with the steady splat of a tasty low-pitched snare. In a very effective display of restraint, that snare features in a brief breakdown that's nothing but vocals and a 2-and-4 backbeat. "I was really going for Al Jackson Jr.," Hayes says. "We first imagined that song like a girl soul-group thing, like TLC. And then it ended up sounding like the Faces."

This year has been an eventful one for the Figgs, with the album release and plenty of gigging, including an April tour



with Graham Parker, whom the group has been backing off and on since 1996. "Touring isn't what it used to be—we're old, we have kids, we don't want to sleep on floors," Hayes says. "We fly places now, rent a car, and use other people's gear. Spending six weeks in a van with your best friends, killing it on stage, partying every night, and waking up late, that's fun as hell. But it's not sustainable. We have a new paradigm for touring, and it's awesome."

Michael Parillo

ON TOUR



Carl Palmer with Asia ///
Dale Crover with Melvins Lite ///
Patrick Hallahan with My Morning Jacket /// **Ryan "Rymo" Moran and Oguer "Og" Ocon** with Slightly Stoopid /// **Mike McKee** with Delta Rae /// **Nathan Donmoyer** with Passion Pit /// **Matt Burr** with Grace Potter and the Nocturnals /// **John Humphrey** with Seether /// **Adrian Aurelius** with the Raveonettes /// **Jim White** with the Dirty Three

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

Donny Gruendler has joined Yamaha's acoustic and electronic drum family.

Pat Lundy (Funeral for a Friend) is playing Premier drums.

John "JR" Robinson, John Riley, Peter Erskine, and Tommy Igoe are endorsing the Drummer Stand by Manhasset.

Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson is now playing Ludwig drums.

Roger Cardillo (Paul Guvitz's New Army, Cindy Standage) is using Los Cabos sticks and TJS Custom drums.



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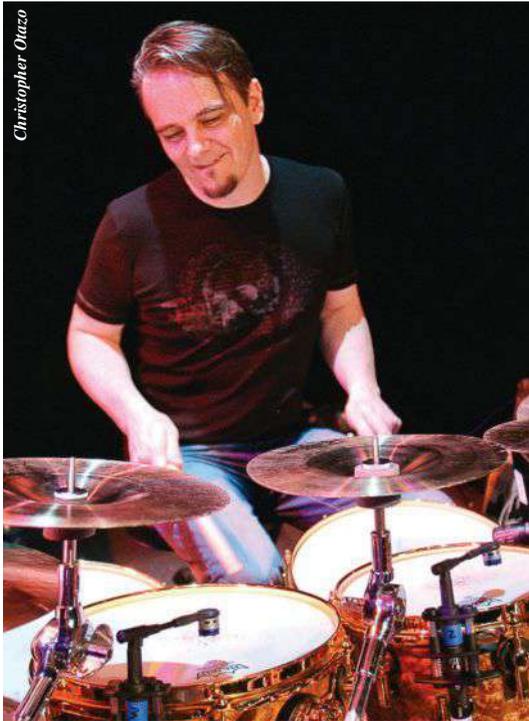


Must-Have Gear

Equipment the Pros Won't Leave Home Without

This month: PORCUPINE TREE'S GAVIN HARRISON

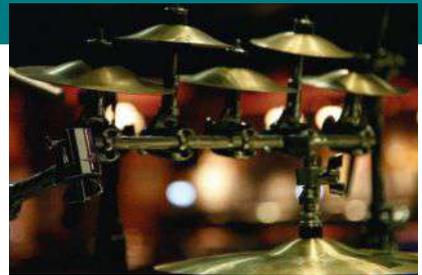
Christopher Otazo



I always like to have my little bell cymbals with me—five of them, just above the hi-hat. They're A Zildjian custom cymbals on a Sonor Basic Arm System stand. They start at 6¹/₂" and go down to 5". I've been using them for about twenty-five years now, and they've just become a part of me. I close my eyes and my sticks just go there.

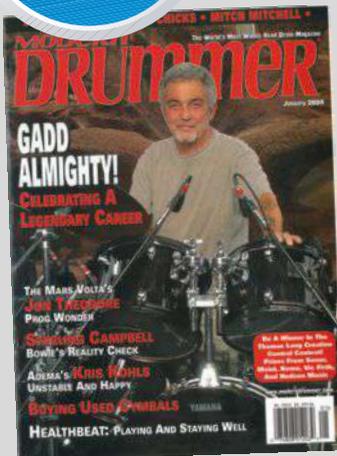
For the last few years I've been really enjoying playing my Sonor 13x15 floor tom. For me it's the perfect size. A 14" just feels a bit too small, and a 16" feels too big after coming from a 12" rack tom. They're quite rare, but once you've played a 15" floor tom there's no going back!

Interview by Mike Haid



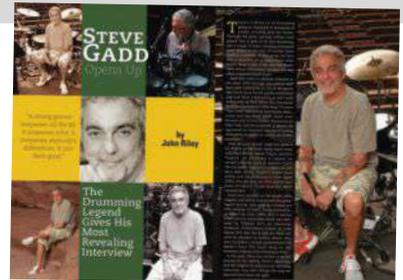
STEVE GADD

In January 2004 we asked the groundbreaking drummer about the genesis of his highly imitated late-70s sound.



Chris Parker was using [Evans Hydraulic heads] and they sounded good, so I started using them. I had a set of drums that I had put together before I was endorsing Yamaha. It was a maple Gretsch bass drum, and I found these one-headed Pearl toms and had bottom heads put on. With the Hydraulic heads on top, they sounded like cannons. That's when I started using a 10" drum as my small tom instead of a 12". So I went 10", 12", 13", and 14", and I found that you could take smaller drums and get them to sound big by tuning them down a little bit. It was easier to get a good sound that way than by taking big drums and tightening them up, because they would get choked up. So those drums sounded great. They still sound good; those drums are in my basement.

After a while the Hydraulics sounded too dead. But it's not like I was setting the sound threshold for other people. What's going on in the industry determines what you have to use to stay up to date, and you have to work with the engineers. So those drums were great at that point, and they were great to play live because of the way they sounded.



To read the entire Steve Gadd feature—and all the other great material from the January 2004 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.

JUELS THOMAS

As the education and events manager at Drum Workshop, she has tour/stage-managed and teched for such artists as Peter Erskine, Alex Acuña, Terry Bozzio, Marco Minnemann, Derek Roddy, Cora Coleman-Dunham, Curt Bisquera, John "JR" Robinson, Stanton Moore, Aaron Spears, Jason McGerr, and Thomas Pridgen, among many others. Here Juels shares ten ways to support your support.



1 KNOW WHAT YOU WANT... Your support staff wants you, the drummer, to be comfortable so you can do your job. That's our job! But we can't do that unless you give us direction. When someone asks for your rider, try to be specific. List the full drum sizes you like, head preferences (top and bottom), hardware/cymbal model names (if you know them), and exact audio requirements. Please don't just say, "A five-piece kit, and I'll be playing to tracks." That leaves way too many things open to interpretation and failure. How many cymbal stands do you need? Are you bringing in-ears, or do we need to provide wedges?

2 ...BUT BE REASONABLE. When you're playing a town that has a population of Bill, Thelma, and their three goats, it's a pretty safe bet there won't be a reputable backline company within miles. So you're going to have to be flexible on some things. If you've asked for a 9x10 tom and they only have an 8x10, go with the flow.

3 WE DON'T LIKE SURPRISES. Sure, bring us flowers, chocolate, power tools. But don't suddenly show up with a DJ and expect the engineer to miraculously produce turntables and extra inputs. Of course, most times we can make all your musical dreams come true. We just need ample notice—please.

4 DON'T ASK MULTIPLE PEOPLE FOR THE SAME THING. You should have one point person. There's

no need to ask your tech *and* stage manager *and* lighting tech for water and towels. This just creates chaos, with several people running around and duplicating work that takes them away from their main tasks. Or, worse yet, each assumes the other guy is on it, and you die thirsty and sweaty.

5 PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES. It might seem as if you have "plenty of time," but there are crucial, valid reasons why things need to be done well in advance of five minutes before showtime. For example, if you're traveling outside your country of residence, you'll likely require a visa of some sort, and possibly vaccinations. Governments are not kidding around about this, *believe me*. If you fail to get your paperwork in on time and you have to cancel a show because you were turned away at the border, your band and crew (and possibly other bands on the bill) will not get paid. And they will totally unfriend you on Facebook forever.

6 ANSWER YOUR EMAIL/TEXT/PHONE. If you don't, we will hire someone else. It doesn't matter how amazing your playing is if we can't get a hold of you.

7 MAKE SOUNDCHECK PRODUCTIVE. Soundcheck is not rehearsal. Everyone should know their parts already. Your goal at this point is to make sure you hear what you need, the rest of the band can hear you, and there's a nice blend out front.

This doesn't require running a whole song top to bottom. Once you're dialed in, move on. You need to get done as soon as possible so you can trash that dressing room. (Bonus tip: Don't trash dressing rooms.)

8 BE ON TIME. Everyone says this. And everyone is right. There is a legitimate reason why the tour manager has put a specific lobby call on the schedule. When you're constantly late, it makes everyone else think, *Well, Frank's not gonna be on time, so I'll just finish a couple more emails*. And then, like dominoes, everyone is late and ends up sprinting through LAX.

9 STAY OUT OF THE WAY. There is such a thing as too early, however. Imagine you're hosting a party and all the guests show up three hours early, hovering around the kitchen as you prepare. Not very helpful, right? You need to trust your staff. If you've told them what you want, they will do it. Certainly arrive a touch early to do final tweaking and maybe tuning if you're the only one who can get your sound. But if you really feel you need to be there to pull drums out of cases, you've hired the wrong tech.

10 SAY THANK YOU. When someone is doing a really great job for you, it's okay to acknowledge it. Feeling appreciated motivates people to do even better. So feel free to give positive feedback. Hey, send gifts if you insist. I happen to like cupcakes and gift cards, in case anyone's wondering.



TECHNOLOGY CORNER by John Emrich

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO AMPLIFY AND MONITOR ELECTRONIC DRUMS?

We can answer this question with two different responses, depending on whether you're working with electronic drums in your studio or on a live gig.

First of all, I recommend getting a really nice set of professional headphones and a small mixer. A mixer won't cost much money and will serve as a headphone amp. I suggest looking at models in Yamaha's MG series and Mackie's VLZ line. I like these for their audio quality and low price. The reason I recommend a small, inexpensive mixer is because the additional channels will allow you to plug in an iPod or other playback device so you can play along with tracks, and the mixer will allow you to add a little EQ to the signal to suit your personal tastes.

I prefer using headphones rather than speakers in a rehearsal/practice situation. This will keep the noise levels down and won't disturb your neighbors. I recommend that you get a set of closed-back headphones, which is a style that isolates the ambient outside sound by incorporating earpads that cover the entire ear. Get the best-quality headphones that you can afford; a really good-sounding set can be found for around \$100. Start by looking at the Sennheiser HD, Shure SR, Sony MDR, and Direct Sound Extreme Isolation models. There's also a wide variety of earbud-style devices.

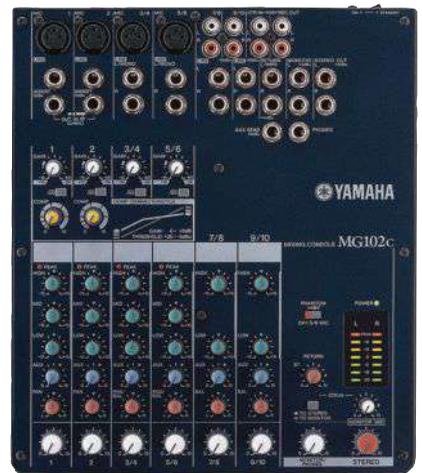
One common complaint about working with headphones is the inability to feel bass frequencies as you would if you were using a PA and a subwoofer. This can be solved with the addition of a small tactile shaker unit, like the Pearl Throne Thumper. This type of product is basically a motor that clamps to your drum throne, and when you send a low-frequency signal to the unit, it shakes, giving you the feeling of being hit with a sub-bass note. It's a great add-on to give you that "playing in a stadium" feel, but you should never do any critical listening with it. These devices are specifically designed to give you a false sense of bass, so they aren't recommended when you're mixing or doing sound design.

Now let's discuss a live monitoring system. If your practice/rehearsal room has enough isolation, you may be able to use speakers so you can get used to how they



sound and operate before taking them out on a gig. Once you get to the gig, you need to determine whether you're using speakers only for you and your bandmates to hear on stage or whether you'll also be providing sound for the house PA. I bring this up because of bass-frequency management. I see a lot of people using stereo rigs on stage with two sets of subwoofers. Bass frequencies are omnidirectional, which means they don't really present a focused point of origin. When you have a lot of bass-frequency amplification on stage, it will compete with the main sound system, creating a muddy overall sound that lacks bass definition.

If you're feeding the signal of your electronic drums to a sound system, it's usually better to control your stage sound so that it doesn't conflict. You'll want to keep your monitor levels a bit lower and be careful that your bass frequencies don't clutter up the house sound. I recommend looking into a powered two-way system consisting of a 15" low-frequency driver and a horn. Look at Yamaha DXR15,



Mackie HD1521, and QSC KW152 speakers as a starting point.

Next you need to decide if you want your drums to go out to the house system in stereo or mono. Keep in mind that once you get about eight feet away from the drumset, it's almost impossible to hear a full stereo image. You may be better off spending a little more money on just one higher-quality speaker for your monitor, rather than a stereo setup. Finally, let the house system do the bulk of the amplification whenever possible, and you'll have a better overall sound.



John Emrich is an expert in the field of electronic percussion. He has produced sample libraries on FXpansion's BFD2 and Eco platforms and has produced products for *Modern Drummer*, Platinum Samples, Bosphorus, Mapex, Alesis, Pearl, WaveMachine Labs, Native Instruments, Yamaha, and Zildjian. For more info, visit johnemrich.com.

LYON & HEALY SNARE

My father-in-law recently uncovered an antique wood-hoop snare drum that we believe is from the 1920s. Could you provide any information on it?

Dan

According to drum historian and *MD Collector's Corner* columnist Harry Cangany, "This drum is pictured in the 1922 catalog from Lyon & Healy in Chicago. It's called the Favorite. Here's the catalog copy: 'Just the drum for the young beginner. These drums are being sold by the hundreds for boy bands and drum corps all over the country. Genuine calfskin heads, metal-plated and polished shell, nickel-plated and polished thumb-screw rods, waterproof snares with thumb-screw strainer, maple hoops with metal strip in center.'

"The drum, which was made in 3x12, 3x13, 3x14, and 4x14 sizes, came with a sling that snapped into the hole shown on the L-shaped piece on one of the rods. The 3x12 you have listed for \$8."



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MEINL

Byzance Vintage Crashes and Jazz Ride Additions

by Michael Dawson

The Byzance series is Meinl's high-end line of B20 bronze cymbals forged in the company's Turkish factory. These instruments are designed to be unique and highly musical, ranging from the classic sounds of the Traditional, Brilliant, Jazz, and Vintage lines to the moodier and more articulate tones of Dark and Extra Dry models. For review this month are a pair of huge, paper-thin Vintage crashes (20" and 22"), full-bodied 20" and 22" Jazz Medium rides, and a slightly flat 22" Jazz Big Apple ride designed in

tribute to the epicenter of jazz, New York City.

VINTAGE CRASHES

These oversize 20" (\$610) and 22" (\$740) crashes are extremely thin, almost to the point where they droop under their own weight, and the edges can be easily folded in with a minimal amount of hand pressure. The top and bottom surfaces are sandblasted, which flattens out the lathing grooves a bit and gives the cymbals a non-shiny, slightly textured appearance.

Dime-size hammer marks are scattered throughout the body.

The Vintage crashes provided very low-pitched yet surprisingly fast-responding sounds. They opened up almost instantly, even with a soft stroke with a finger, and the wash died down evenly and relatively quickly—certainly faster than with any 20" or 22" ride cymbal I've used as a crash in the past. Since these cymbals have so much flex, they felt really great to play. There was almost no stick shock from striking them, even at full volume. I was

most surprised by how loud they were. Just because they're paper thin doesn't mean they can't emit room-clearing decibels. But they also responded well to light playing. For drummers—like me—who often prefer to use thin ride cymbals as crashes, these might provide a better feel and more of the huge, wavelike attack you've been wanting.

JAZZ MEDIUM RIDES

The 20" (\$610) and 22" (\$740) Jazz Medium rides are a bit thicker than the regular Byzance Jazz models, so they had a stronger attack and a firmer feel. The surface features the same dime-size hammer marks that the Vintage crashes have, which helps dirty up the sound. The pitches were lower than I expected from cymbals designated as medium, and these rides weren't as pingy as I thought they would be, yet the stick attack was clearer and more defined than on thinner rides. The best way I can describe the sound of the Jazz Mediums is that they possessed the dark, complex undertones and trashiness of a thin vintage ride with extra clarity and the stronger overall sound of a modern, heavier cymbal.

JAZZ BIG APPLE RIDE

The 22" Big Apple ride (\$740) is a unique cymbal in the Byzance Jazz series. It has a smaller bell and a much flatter bow, which makes for a lighter, more articulate sound. The stick attack was clean and clear, and the sustain was full and shimmering but also controlled. This cymbal performed best at lighter volumes, but it could also handle fast and harder jazz styles without washing out. The bell was low pitched and sounded balanced with the more subdued sound of the bow, and edge hits produced full but focused crashes. This ride doesn't feature the large, dime-size hammer marks that are on the Vintage crashes and Jazz Medium rides. Instead, the surface has a combination of softer hammering and sharp notches. This cymbal would be really good to use in low-volume situations where you would otherwise rely on a flat ride for more control.

meinlcymbals.com



LP

Twist Shakers and Jam Tamb

by Adam Budofsky

The part that's most fun about reviewing a piece of hand percussion is realizing how much there is to learn about playing it *well*, rather than just serviceably. There's a big world of percussion technique that, as drumset players with sticks in our hands, we don't often explore. And though it's easy to get a usable sound out of most shakers and tambourines, for instance, time spent with an instructor or in a recording studio makes clear how much more effective we can be by exploring an instrument's subtleties.

Two new products from LP certainly offer lots of possibilities for the drummer/percussionist. The Twist Shaker (\$24.99), available in Soft, Medium, and Loud versions, is similar in design to LP's delicate-sounding Soft Shake, which is made up of a pair of matching tube-shaped shakers held together with rubber bands. Twist Shakers can also be "disassembled" and played as two separate instruments, and they're held together with a simple but clever locking channel that allows them to be separated extremely quickly for two-handed patterns.

The Twist Shakers' design and relatively light weight immediately appealed to the drumset player in me, and I found that I could sort of "roll" with them in the air, approximating quick snare drum sticking patterns. Offering the shakers in versions aimed at a range of dynamics from quiet to loud is a nice touch. And I had a ball using



them to add overdubs to an existing piece of music, especially when experimenting with pitch adjustments, delay, and such. One particularly echo-drenched track resulted in a nice approximation of a subway car click-clacking through a tunnel.

LP's Jam Tamb (\$54.99) is another item that should appeal to drumset players. Essentially a Jam Block redesigned as a stick-playable tambourine, the Jam Tamb features a heavy-duty eye-bolt mounting bracket that allows it to be attached to a $\frac{3}{8}$ " rod or to your hi-hat pull rod. There are lighter hi-hat tambourines on the market, including LP's own Cyclops Jingle Rings, that will put less weight on your hi-hat. But I didn't find the Jam Tamb terribly disruptive in that sense, and its compact shape and attack-silencing rubber ridge make it uniquely useful and easily placed in even the most tricked-out setup. And its six pairs of nickel-plated steel jingles cut through the roar of a rock band just fine.

lpmusic.com



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CREATION

Barry Altschul Signature Drumset

by Michael Dawson

In our November 2011 feature story with jazz great Barry Altschul, the drummer does his best to describe his no-boundaries approach to music, stating, "I don't mind saying I'm a free drummer, but my definition of being free is having choices. If I have more musical choices, then I'm freer." For years, Altschul relied on a vintage bebop drumset as the vehicle to carry his musical muse, but after checking out a Creation kit he decided to collaborate with the small New Jersey company to design a new signature instrument that provides all of the nuance, color, and tone that his art demands.

BARRY'S SPECS

The Creation Barry Altschul signature drumset features a 13x18 bass drum, 7x12 and 8x12 rack toms, a 13x14 floor tom, and a 4³/₄x14 matching snare. The shells are 6-ply African mahogany with 10-ply maple reinforcement rings. All of the drums have aircraft-aluminum lugs, and the toms and snare come with die-cast hoops. The deep, rich outside finish consists of nine coats of hand-rubbed lacquer, and the interior of



each drum is treated with nine coats of teak oil. All of the edges are cut to what Creation calls a "soft 45 degrees."

The snare has a twenty-strand PureSound Blaster strainer and a Dunnett throw-off. Being that Creation is a custom company, these kits can be made to order according to each player's needs. For

instance, if you'd rather have a 10" tom instead of the second 12", you can. Or you can order the kit with a 20" bass drum. The outfit we received for review was Altschul's setup with his personal head selection, which comprised Remo Coated Ambassadors on top of the toms and snare and on the front of the bass drum. The toms had Clear Ambassador bottoms, and the bass drum had a Clear CS black-dot batter. Barry also had a vintage muffling system installed inside each of the drums.

OPEN-ENDED TONE

When asked about the sound he was looking for with this drumset, Altschul explains, "I wanted a combination of traditional and modern. I wanted full, rich tones that could be heard as notes, a warm sound, a fast and clear-sounding response, a quick attack with minimum effort, and ringing tones—but not so much that it interferes with clarity and

distinctiveness. I want [the drums] to project and have a good tuning range. I wanted the sound quality of a great acoustic stringed instrument, like a bass or cello, that fills your body. And I wanted them to look good."

We received this kit after Altschul had spent a couple weeks tweaking it to his liking. The toms and snare were tuned moderately tightly and to intervals that created a diminished seventh chord (minor thirds up from the floor tom to the snare). This tuning provided a very musical and cohesive sound that wasn't too tonal. I found myself spending hours exploring a more textural drumming approach with this kit, playing a lot of rumbling rolls, melodic motifs, and non-genre-specific grooves. The toms were very punchy and full sounding, with a pure tone, a warm resonance, and a quick decay. The bass drum sounded round and full, with a pure pitch and minimal high overtones. It had every-

thing I wanted from a "jazz" bass drum.

The Altschul signature snare fell right in line with the bass drum and toms. With the snares off, it produced a clear pitch with an articulate crack and a short decay, plus few overtones. With the snares on, the drum was articulate but not harsh sounding, with a full, rich tone. It reminded me of several vintage wood-shell snares I've played, but with the added clarity and precision that you get from a modern-day instrument. The Barry Altschul signature snare is also available separately, so if you're still searching for a drum that truly encapsulates the '50s/'60s post-bop vibe, see if you can get your hands on one of these. And if you ever have the opportunity to sit down behind one of Altschul's signature kits, don't let it pass you by. The drums have music living inside, just waiting to be set free.

creationdrums.com

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BRADY

8x14 Wandoo Block Snare

by Michael Dawson

This 8x14 beast from the legendary drum builder Brady is made from vertical pieces of 1/2"-thick eucalyptus wandoo, which is an extremely dense wood found in the southwestern region of Western Australia. Brady has been making drums from the semi-rare timber for years, as it provides the super-present, cutting, and chunky sound that's part of the company's hallmark. This model features ten chrome-over-brass tube lugs, triple-flange steel hoops, a Trick GS007 throw-off, twenty-strand steel snare wires, Canopus Bolt Tight leather/steel/leather tension-rod washers, and a Remo Coated CS black-dot batter. The beautiful drummer boy badge is made from pewter and is a great complement to the drum's streamlined, natural look.

We tested this drum by playing and

recording it at various tunings, from as low as it would go (75 on a DrumDial) up to its highest possible pitch (around 90). Because of the 8" depth, we expected the snares to be slower to respond and less sensitive than they are on shallower drums, but they had a sharp, crisp attack at any tuning. Midrange head tension (84–86) brought out a lot more shell tone, which may or may not require some dampening, depending on the gig. When tuned this way, the Brady almost sounded like a metal-shell drum—with added body.

Where the 8x14 wandoo sounded best to my ears was at the extremes of its tun-

ing range. With the batter head very tight, I could have sworn I was playing a much shallower drum—it had tons of pop and a dense, short tone. When I backed off the tension almost to the point of wrinkling and threw on a little muffling, I found a super-fat, punchy voice that also had a lot of clarity and snap. And there was a great wide-open tone living in the medium-low range that I'd go to for mid-tempo rock grooves. The only potential problem with owning a drum this deep would be finding a snare stand that can go low enough. Street price: \$1,299.

bradydrums.com



GIBRALTAR

Turning Point Series Cymbal Stands

by Miguel Monroy

Always keeping the drummer in mind, Gibraltar has released a new line of hardware, dubbed the Turning Point series, with two important objectives: to lighten the load and to make for faster cymbal changes. We recently received three Turning Point stands, two from the 6000 series and one from the 9000 series, to check out for review.



SWING NUT

All three stands that we received featured the new Swing Nut cymbal mounting system. This system eliminates the need for wing nuts by incorporating a unique cymbal tilter that utilizes a small, swiveling metal bar that can be easily

moved between a vertical and a horizontal position, thus allowing the cymbal to be quickly removed and replaced. While in the horizontal position, the bar holds the top cymbal felt securely in place. After I mounted a cymbal, I was able to fine-tune the amount of tension on it by adjusting the spring tension assembly, which sits below the bottom cymbal felt.

6000 SERIES STRAIGHT AND BOOM STANDS

Turning Point 6000 series cymbal stands boast all the rugged features that you'd expect from Gibraltar, while utilizing lighter-weight and lower-mass elements for easier transport. We received the 6610TP straight stand and the 6609TP boom stand. Both models feature a three-tier, hinged height adjustment that goes from 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " to 1" to $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Additionally, each height adjustment has cast-metal parts with ABS inserts that eliminate metal-on-metal contact. The stands also came equipped with memory locks, which I could change easily with a standard drum



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key. The double-braced tripod assembly consistently provided maximum stability as I tested the stands in several positions.

9000 SERIES CYMBAL STAND

Turning Point 9000 series cymbal stands have chrome-plated arrow-shaped legs made from L-stock aluminum, which reduces each stand's weight by 20 percent. We received the 9709UA-TP for review, which features several upgrades and innovations. The first is the Gearless Brake Tilter that can rotate and be positioned at nearly any desired angle. The tilter can be tightened with a wing nut and also comes with a backup positioning system that secures the cymbal in place with the use of a standard drum key. Another upgrade on this stand is the Super Lock hinged height-adjustment system, which eliminates metal-on-metal contact and includes a wing-nut-adjustable memory lock.

The highlight of the 9709UA-TP cymbal stand was the second-tier Ultra Adjust gearless positioning arm. This new system is a game changer, as it allows you to

adjust the entire top tier of the stand, which includes a 10" mini hideaway boom arm, into virtually any imaginable position. The arm is locked into place by tightening a T-rod. I tested the Ultra Adjust arm in several positions, and it never gave even the slightest indication of slipping or moving out of place. I was able to set the stand any way I needed to, and it always maintained superior stability.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Turning Point series from Gibraltar is a successful attempt to answer the cries of working drummers wanting flexible, lighter, and more efficient hardware. The new Swing Nut provides for faster cymbal changes, while the lighter stands are much easier to transport. Then there's the new Ultra Adjust arm, which offers the utmost in positioning flexibility. Once again, Gibraltar has proven itself as a company dedicated to providing a full spectrum of hardware options to meet the needs of any drummer.

gibraltarhardware.com



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6610-TP Straight Cymbal Stand

The Swing Nut[®]

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mounting FAST with fully-adjustable spring-
loaded action.



Gibraltar
www.GibraltarHardware.com

ALESIS SamplePad

by Mark Pry

Before we dive into the details of the SamplePad, let me begin by saying that I like this module. As with most products of its kind, there's room for improvement. But if you're looking for a no-frills, lightweight, compact, easy-to-use, and—most important—inexpensive solution to add auxiliary percussion and electronic sounds to your setup, look no further.

The Alesis SamplePad was introduced earlier this year as the next-generation version of the company's popular PercPad. The new model is a bit sleeker and allows users to upload their own samples, rather than being restricted to the factory sounds. Other pads on the market offer a robust set of features, such as the ability to record and play back module performances, a larger bank of effects, more external inputs, and so on. The SamplePad's simplicity, however, is one of its greatest assets. This thing is *extremely* easy to use. After taking the unit out of the box and giving it a five-minute spin following the included start-up guide, I was already scheming where I would implant it in my setup. The onboard sounds are pretty good and consist of standard snaps and claps, as well as triangle, cowbell, and a few toms and snares, all of which could prove useful for adding an extra layer of sound to your kit.

The LCD display on the SamplePad is highly visible and well thought out. For starters, it's located at the top of the module, which keeps it out of reach of errant strokes. The LCD also tells you everything you need to know at a glance. This may not seem significant at first, but trust me—it will come in handy when you're doing a frenzied five-minute sound-check in a smaller club. Want to know the current sample volume? Look at the display. Need to know your reverb level? It's right there. Compare this to having to shift through two or three submenus on other modules to get the same information.

The module's four pads are responsive and have a fairly natural feel. Double strokes and buzz rolls were not only easy to execute, but they also translated well with any sample sound, including those imported from the SD card. And the pads are sensitive enough to express dynamics accurately without exaggerating volume differences between strokes.

So that's what we liked about the Alesis SamplePad. What we didn't like comprises a very short list. It wouldn't be fair to point out



what this pad doesn't offer compared to others on the market, especially when you consider that more complex pads also feature a much heftier price tag. Still, the fact that imported WAV files must be in mono format, instead of stereo, could be off-putting. Most samples that you can download from the Internet or find in other drum module libraries are stereo by default. A simple and free workaround is to install a shareware program like Audacity to your computer so you can convert files manually from stereo to mono before uploading them to the SamplePad. The onboard reverb could also stand to be a bit more "reverb-y." Even with the effect set to the maximum, it was still only about half as intense as I would have liked it to be. Again, this can easily be circumvented in studio situations, and a savvy sound engineer could further enhance the SamplePad's sounds during live dates.

alesis.com

VITAL SPECS

Here's a quick rundown of the most important features of the SamplePad.

- Four pads
- R and L/Mono 1/4" main audio outputs
- Stereo headphone output
- Kick trigger input (can be configured as a kick trigger or a foot switch)
- MIDI out
- 25 onboard sounds
- Ability to upload WAV files via SD card (mono only, maximum file size of 10 MB)
- Sample tuning, reverb, pad sensitivity, and panning adjustments
- \$299 list price





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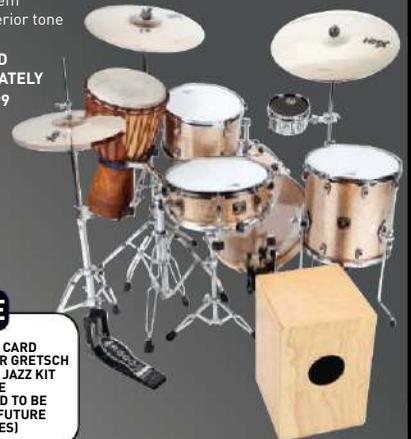
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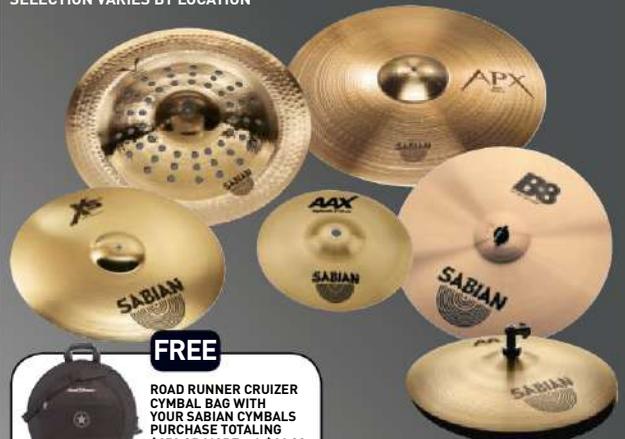
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- 10x8, 12x9" rack toms, 14x12, 16x14" floor toms, 22x18" bass, 14x5" snare
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- Fast Foot pedal board is longer and smoother for added control
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Zildjian



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\$50 INSTANT REBATE

K Zildjian series cast bronze cymbals are best known for their versatility and warm, dark sound. Meanwhile, K Custom cymbals' quicker response and decay, control and complex sound have helped them become associated with the sound of modern jazz.

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14" CRASH
AFTER \$50 INSTANT REBATE
PRICE TOO LOW TO PRINT



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NEW AT GUITAR CENTER

- 21" Ride medium-weight cymbal,
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 - 20th Anniversary custom white logo and laser stamp
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NEW

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FIVE ESSENTIAL ZILDJIAN CYMBALS TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR KIT

GUITAR CENTER EXCLUSIVE

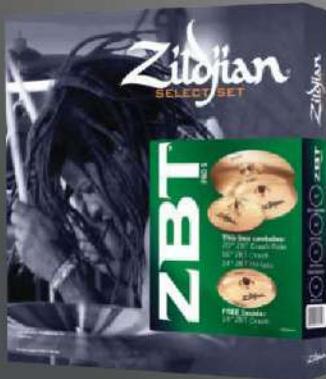
- Five medium-weight cymbals
 - 14" Hi-hats, 16" crash, 20" crash ride and a free 14" crash
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\$299⁹⁵

SAVE 45% OFF LIST

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14" ZBT CRASH INCLUDED IN BOX WITH ZBT PRO 5 PACK PURCHASE



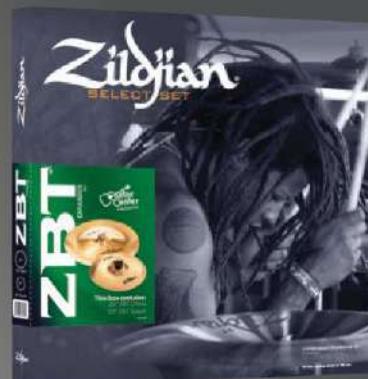
TWO MUST-HAVE ZILDJIAN ZBT CYMBALS FOR ONE LOW PRICE

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 - Drumstick bag pocket
 - Oversized padded shoulder strap
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4 PAIRS FOR THE PRICE OF 3

- Hickory sticks with oval wood tip
 - Choose your pack with a free pair of purple or green DIP sticks
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drums
dw ENOUGH SAID.
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GEARING UP

Drumkit Details,
On Stage and Up Close

Maná's Alex González



Drums: DW Collector's series maple/mahogany

- A. 5 1/2"x14 aluminum snare with RimRiser placed at 3 o'clock position
- B. 10x14 ice bucket tom
- C. 5x12 maple snare
- D. 4x13 LP stainless steel Rock timbale
- E. 7x8 tom
- F. 8x12 tom
- G. 12x14 floor tom
- H. 14x18 floor tom
- I. 18x24 bass drum

"For every tour supporting a new album, we've designed a custom kit," González says. "The drums have designs of dragons, skulls, doves, Aztec birds, and Mexican Mayan traditional images. The graphics were outlined in three sizes of 30,000 hand-applied Swarovski crystals. The artwork goes with the theme of the album. Even the ice bucket tom, which was made three days prior to leaving for the tour, got a little dragon in Swarovski crystal."

"With the toms, I did something interesting while recording the album. Instead of going standard, I wanted to make a dynamic and more aggressive scale, so that's why I went from 8" to 12" to 14" to 18"."

Percussion: LP Cyclops tambourine and Rock cowbell

Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. 14" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
- 2. 19" 2002 Power crash
- 3. 16" 2002 China
- 4. 20" 2002 Power crash
- 5. 7 1/2" 2002 Cup Chime
- 6. 8" Signature Dark Energy Mark I splash
- 7. 10" 2002 splash
- 8. 22" 2002 Power ride
- 9. 20" 2002 Medium crash
- 10. 15" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
- 11. 20" 2002 China
- 12. 19" Wild China and 17" 2002 Power Rock crash (stacked)

Not pictured: 26" Moon Gong (rolled out during drum solo)

All of the cymbal holders feature stainless steel tops with inlaid Swarovski crystals. "The 2002s are great overall cymbals for rock, pop, funk, and even jazz," González says. "They're also very loyal in their sound. If you crack one, you can go to a music store and pull one from the shelf, and it will sound exactly the same."

Hardware: DW 9000 series double pedal, hi-hat stand, and throne. Floor tom legs have been cut down to avoid covering any drum artwork. González also uses a customized DW rack system attached to an acrylic riser that elevates, rotates 180 degrees, and moves forward by remote control.

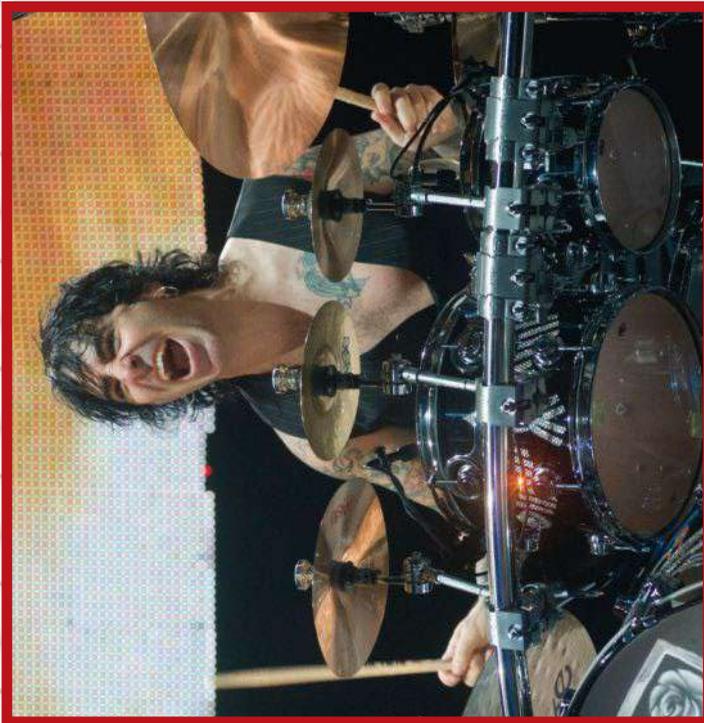
Heads: Remo Emperor X snare batters and Ambassador snare-side bottoms, Coated Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, Smooth White Ambassador timbale batter, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter (with Falam Slam pad) and painted Coated Emperor front head

"I try for a fat, punchy sound from my kick, with a pillow and sometimes a rolled-up towel inside. The batter head is medium to loose, and the front head is not too tight. I don't tune the toms too tight or too loose. I also want them to have a fat and punchy sound, but I want to get a nice bounce. My snares are tuned very tight, à la Stewart Copeland, but not choked."

Sticks: Vic Firth Alex González signature model with the grip notched with a taco knife. The sticks are held in a large martini shaker that has been drilled and clamped to a floor tom leg.

Microphones: Shure Beta 181 front overheads, KSM137 rear overheads, SM81 on ride and hi-hats, SM57 on snares and timbale, Beta 91A inside bass drum, Beta 52 outside bass drum, Beta 98 on rack toms, and Beta 98A on floor toms; Crown CM-311 wireless unit

In-Ear Monitors: JH Audio JH16 Pro



SETTING SIGHTS

Nate Smith

The Dave Holland/
Chris Potter regular
attacks jazz, R&B, and
whatever else he plays
with equal intensity.
Here he shares the
shedding practices
that allow him to
rise to any occasion.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Paul La Raia



Following the drumsticks of Marvin “Smitty” Smith and Billy Kilson is no easy task, but thirty-seven-year-old Nate Smith has more than made the various gigs he holds with Dave Holland his own. Playing in the astute bass player and bandleader’s big band, octet, and quintet since 2003, Smith has proven his mettle as a dynamic, flexible, and incredibly explosive drummer. On Holland’s most recent quintet release, *Critical Mass*, Smith simmers swinging Latin on “The Eyes Have It,” plays skunk-funk drags and New Orleans intimations on “Easy Did It,” swings it mean and lowdown on the plaintive “The Leak,” and navigates complex metric territory (and a brain-rattling rim-click-endowed solo) on “Lucky Seven.”

But beyond his potent jazz drumming abilities, which he pursues with, among others, tenor saxophonist Chris Potter, vocalist Claudia Acuña, guitarist Adam Rogers, and his band the Wink and the Gun with alto sax player Jaleel Shaw, bassist Fima Ephron, and guitarist Jeremy Most, Smith is an adept R&B and soundtrack producer. His music has been heard on PBS and the Discovery Channel, and his album productions include the soul artists YahZarah, Maya Azucena, John Gordon, and Shanta “Bunmi” Jasper. Most recently he produced and mixed Jarrard Anthony’s *Ready to Live*. Smith even cowrote and coproduced “Heaven Can Wait” for Michael Jackson’s *Invincible* album. A rare musician who’s seemingly unconstrained by genre, Nate is touring this summer with the iconic ’80s new wave artist Joe Jackson.

You might be surprised to learn that Smith is self-taught. But when you think you’re out of luck because you don’t have a good teacher or access to academic riches, take a cue from Nate’s empowering brand of success.

MD: In the video section of your website, the first drum solo with the Dave Holland Quintet sums up how well you contrast ferocity with a sense of calm. You really nail it, and then you lay back. How did that signature style evolve?

Nate: I didn’t start out as a jazz drummer when I was eleven. I was a rock drummer. My earliest influences were Stewart Copeland with the Police and Will Calhoun with Living Colour. There are traces of them in my drumming now. That energy is a big part of it. Even as I’ve gotten older and played in more situations, I’m conscious of it. I can pick and choose different ideas for each context, but that rock drumming thing is always in there.

MD: In that same solo, you execute clever displacement, you play dancing figures on the hi-hat, and there are Roy Haynes and Steve Gadd references. And it’s all very clear and deliberate.

Nate: Different sounds really inspire different ideas. I might play one part of the cymbal and then another part of it, and the two sounds produce totally different ideas. When I’m focusing on the hi-hat or doing displacement, it’s always inspired by the sound of the instrument. If the drums are really tight and dead sounding, I’ll play differently from how I will if the sound is open. And not just for solos but in ensembles as well, the sound

of the drums really dictates how I react. In that solo I’m playing the duple against the three; I’ve been exploring that feel for a while. Because the vamp is in three, it opens up all these different possibilities. Playing different feels against the meter is a concept I’ve been thinking about a lot, especially when I’m playing over a vamp. You want to find different ways to make the vamp interesting and to create [a thematic] arc.

MD: Can you address the displacement in the solo?

Nate: For a lot of the displacement, I’m trying to converge with Dave on the 1 of the bar. I displace often when I solo, but also in general. When you move the displacement off the grid, you can hear it a little better. When it’s all happening at the same time, certain sounds get obfuscated by others. But when you move it away, you can really hear what the rim sounds like, as when I play the rim a millisecond behind the hi-hat. That creates a whole other thing. “What happens if I push it this far or push it ahead?” Playing the rimclick is one of my favorite sounds.

MD: You react very well in the moment. With some drummers you can hear them thinking; you almost know where they’re going to land. But you’re creatively explosive.

Nate: I’ve learned how to relax. Those first couple of years I was playing with Dave, 2003 to 2005, I was really



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Smith doesn't endorse one drum maker, but his preferred setup includes a 5x14 snare, a 12" rack tom, a 14" floor tom, and a 20" bass drum. His Zildjian cymbals include 13" A Custom hi-hats, a 22" Constantinople Medium Thin Low ride, a 22" K Custom High Definition ride, a 16" A Custom crash, and a 16" EFX crash. His sticks are Vater wood-tip Manhattan 7As.

nervous. It's hard to explain, but I finally stopped worrying. When you can get yourself out of the way, you can really hear what the cats are playing. There's a certain amount of confidence that you build over time. Not arrogance, but just, "Okay, I'm relaxed. I sound good, the drums sound good; I can go for it." Relaxation is key. My favorite drummers—Steve Gadd, Omar Hakim, Dennis Chambers, Elvin Jones, Harvey Mason—they all play in a very relaxed way. The left-hand ghost-stroke thing Harvey Mason did with Herbie Hancock on *Sunlight*? That screams relaxation.

MD: You've played with so many people in New York City recently: Chris Potter's *Underground*, Ravi Coltrane, Jose James, Lionel Loueke, Randy Brecker, Claudia Acuña. How did you become adept at playing so many styles?

Nate: Technically, I learned to play less. I learned to appreciate the quarter note, just playing quarter notes on the cymbal or hi-hat. There's an environment the drummer can create just by playing less and really focusing on the total sound. In terms of skills, being able to play less is important.

MD: What do you practice now?

Nate: My warm-ups are all about maintaining stick control and dealing with rudiments. My roots are in marching band, so I like to shed the rudiments, slow

to fast. There's nothing that brings you back to that clean slate than sitting in front of a practice pad and playing LRLR. Start really slowly and build up, whatever the rudiment is. I shed them from soft to loud or from slow to fast. If I'm shedding flam taps, I'll start really slow and really loud. As I speed up, I'll get softer. Playing from slow to fast and decreasing in dynamics helps me to center myself. Or playing a simple groove on the kit in whatever time signature for a minute or two—you'd be surprised how meditative that is. That enables you to say, "I've got this. This is cool. This is my instrument." That gives you consistency.

MD: You played with the great jazz vocal-

ist Betty Carter from 1992 to 1998. So many of today's top drummers played with her. What did you learn from Betty?

Nate: One thing she would always say is, "Never hold back." Don't let the energy wane. Keep it up. At the Blue Note once in '97, I was playing the ballad "Every Time We Say Goodbye" with her, on brushes. But I was playing way too much. Betty was in the middle of the verse, and she whispered to me, "It's too noisy." People in the front row heard it. That was the only time that she gave me a specific musical criticism.

MD: She often started shows with the fastest song of the night. How did you cope with that?

INFLUENCES

Charles Lloyd *Forest Flower* (Jack DeJohnette) /// **Miles Davis** *Kind of Blue* (Jimmy Cobb) /// **The Police** *Zenyatta Mondatta* (Stewart Copeland) /// **Sting** *The Dream of the Blue Turtles* (Omar Hakim) /// **Peter Gabriel** *So* (Manu Katché, Jerry Marotta, Stewart Copeland) /// **Living Colour** *Time's Up* (Will Calhoun) /// **Herbie Hancock** *Head Hunters* (Harvey Mason) /// **Prince** *Sign "O" the Times* movie (Sheila E) /// **James Brown** *Black Caesar* soundtrack (Jabo Starks) /// **Joe Sample** *Rainbow Seeker* (Stix Hooper)

RECORDINGS

Dave Holland Quintet "Full Circle" from *Critical Mass* /// **Chris Potter Underground** "Togo" from *Follow the Red Line: Live at the Village Vanguard*, "Facing East" from *Ultrahang*, "Big Top" and "Next Best Western" from *Underground* /// **Taylor Haskins** "Here Is the Big Sky" and "Clouds Form Below Us" from *Recombination* /// **Jürgen Hagelocher** "Corruptionists" from *Leap in the Dark* /// **Dave Holland Octet** "How's Never?" from *Pathways*

"And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you, here I opened wide the door;
Darkness there, and nothing more."

-Poe-
The Raven



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NATE SMITH

Nate: Youthful hubris! I was twenty-three then. It was just me saying, "I can do it, yeah!" One of the things Betty might have liked about me was the fact that I played with a lot of heart. She liked that I was coming at the music in an aggressive way. But I was hanging, I was cutting it.

MD: What's been the biggest challenge of the Dave Holland gig?

Nate: Making it my own was a challenge. Billy Kilson is so great, and he is such a big part of the sound of that group. But it became a lot easier when I stopped think-

ing about it. When I just decided to play, I got to the point where I am now. When we recorded *Critical Mass* I felt very invested in those tunes, because by then I really felt like a part of the band.

MD: Growing up in Virginia, you were in marching band, and you played drumset in city jazz band, timpani in city orchestra, and orchestral percussion in high school. And you were completely self-taught?

Nate: Yes. I was shedding all the time, though. And I watched my dad's music videos and listened to his record collec-

tion. In concert band, timpani was about ear training and understanding tuning for intervals. I was totally immersed, from drumset to marching band to concert band. I got *Podemski's Standard Snare Drum Method*, which got me into writing snare drum rhythms. I was writing marching percussion rhythms too. And before all that I'd had a year of piano lessons. In band camp, our drum line instructor, Dave Snead, would write out his routines. He'd mix up the sticking combinations and rudiments, and I'd take the routines and transpose them to drumset.

MD: What did you focus on when you were practicing?

Nate: At first, reading, playing snare drum, and mallet work. I began playing my brother's old drumset, just basic beats, fast and slow. I listened to pop records and transcribed the beats. Every day after high school I would play from three until six. I would put Living Colour, the Police, or Peter Gabriel on my Walkman and play along with that.

MD: How did you develop the ride cymbal beat, comping, and feathering the bass drum?

Nate: I studied for a jazz performance degree in grad school. My undergrad was in media arts and design, but I played in every ensemble, every group. I was always in the practice room in the music building. I was absorbing it.

MD: You tend to play single-stroke rolls rather than double strokes.

Nate: I shed them a lot, and I warm up with singles before gigs. I do it on a pad or on a folded towel to get less resistance, usually without a metronome. I used to shed a lot to a click. I hope to do more odd-meter R&B. When you have programmed percussion but live drumming and odd meters, you can displace.

MD: What advice can you give to the drummers who want all your gigs?

Nate: Listen to everything you can get your hands on. Be curious. Do your homework on as much music as you can. Learn and learn and learn. And be a cool person. Ninety-five percent of this is getting along with people. The majority of the time you're with people off stage, not on stage. You spend more time in the *airport* than you do on stage. So it's important to be a cool person—and to stick with it. That's number one: Don't give up. I've had to take that advice myself!

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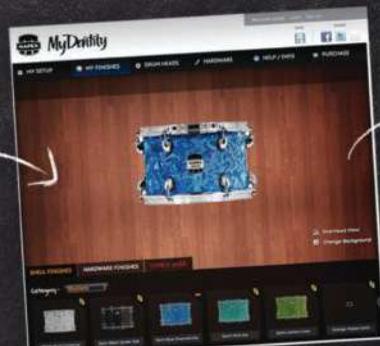
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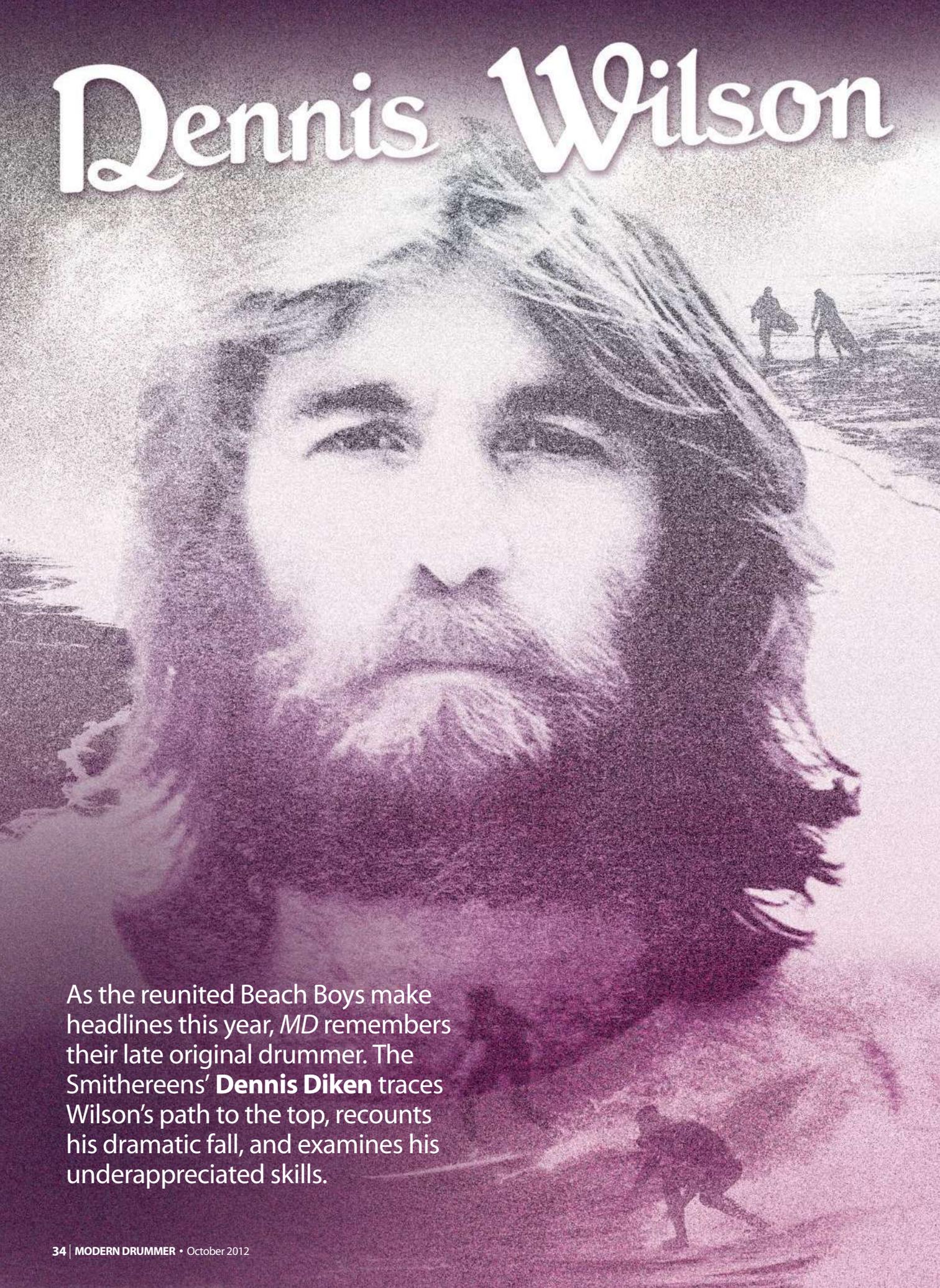


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Dennis Wilson



As the reunited Beach Boys make headlines this year, *MD* remembers their late original drummer. The Smithereens' **Dennis Diken** traces Wilson's path to the top, recounts his dramatic fall, and examines his underappreciated skills.

Through the years, the Beach Boys have been misunderstood by many casual listeners. While their sun-splashed harmonies and exquisite

melodies have kept spirits high across the globe for decades, the “fun in the sun” themes largely associated with the band belie the sophistication of much of the music. Fact is, the group ranks among the most influential creative forces of the twentieth century.

The Beach Boys’ original drummer, Dennis Wilson, also tends to get short shrift. Indeed, he’s not associated with the stuff of many exalted stickmen. Solos and double-stroke rolls were not his thing. There are no instruction books or videos bearing his name. Clinics? Well, he probably visited a few for medical treatment during his short, pedal-to-the-metal existence. More important, though, Dennis Wilson rocked—like his life depended on it.

He poured his colossal heart and soul into everything he did. Passionate, free, helplessly romantic, generous, and cool are a few words that come to mind to describe Denny. He breathed life into the music of the Beach Boys, and in so doing, he played a major role in helping to define an era as well as change the face of popular culture forever.

Sadly, as the surviving members of “America’s band” celebrate the Boys’ fiftieth anniversary this summer with a reunion tour and a new album, the man who best embodied the spirit of the group—the real “beach boy,” the only avid surfer among them—is no longer on this planet to share the lime-light with his mates. The cult of Dennis has grown through the years, and Wilson’s myriad talents and achievements continue to be discovered by new and old fans alike.

EARLY YEARS

Dennis Carl Wilson (born December 4, 1944; died December 28, 1983) was the middle of the three Wilson boys of Hawthorne, California. The oldest was Brian, a shy, athletic kid who lived for music. He was greatly inspired by Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue” at a young age and displayed an uncanny ability to decipher the intricate modern harmonies of the Four Freshmen. Carl, the youngest, was a serious guitar student. All three Wilsons dug Chuck Berry and the rock ‘n’ roll of the ‘50s and early ‘60s.

When their mother, Audree, led songfests at the Wilsons’ Baldwin organ, the restless Dennis preferred to run amok



most anywhere else, checking under trash-can lids to see what was there and generally looking for action. When he did sit still, Denny played the boogie-woogie his mom taught her boys at the piano and joined in the harmonizing with his brothers in the backseat of the family car and at bedtime. Father Murry was a stern taskmaster and frustrated songwriter, yet he melted at the sounds of his sons’ sweet vocalizing.

More classic a story you will not find. When the Wilsons’ cousin Mike Love (a doo-wop fanatic) and high school friend Al Jardine (a singing guitarist who dug folk music) banded together with the boys in 1961, it was Dennis who suggested they write a song about surfing, one of his favorite pastimes and a burgeoning sport popular around the local South Bay area as well as the entire coastal United States. Brian and Mike duly penned “Surfin’,” and the Beach Boys (nee Pendletones) were born, with an instant hook inspired by Dennis’s idea.

As the story goes, the other guys didn’t want Dennis in the group, but Audree insisted he not be left out. The band needed a drummer, and seventeen-year-old Dennis, the most physical in the bunch, was “it.”

Success happened virtually overnight. “Surfin’” was recorded in October 1961 and released on the tiny Candix label; it smashed into the top five around L.A. and reached number seventy-five on the national *Billboard* chart in early 1962. Murry gave up his machinery business to manage the Beach Boys full time and landed them a deal with Capitol Records.

Carl was the baby, pushing sixteen. Brian and Al, at nineteen, trailed a twenty-year-old Mike.

It’s been said that Dennis stormed out of that first-ever recording session when Murry deemed his drumming inadequate. Purportedly, that’s Brian banging on a drum or a garbage can on “Surfin’.” But Dennis nevertheless steps out for a solo bridge vocal on the disc’s B-side, “Luau.”

David Marks, whose chugging rhythm guitar helped shape the personality of the early Beach Boys sound after Jardine temporarily left the fold in 1962, had begun playing with Carl in 1958 and first recorded with the band at age thirteen. Marks, a neighbor of the Wilsons’, hung tight with a preteen Dennis and recalls, “I couldn’t wait for him to come over to the house to take me on my next adventure. He’d always have something exciting to do, like starting forest fires, chopping trees down, or mainly just destroying stuff!”

Though it’s been written that Dennis briefly studied the traps at one time, Marks remembers, “He started off cold, by just picking up sticks and playing in the Wilson music room. He’d watch other drummers and grab licks from listening to the Ventures, Chuck Berry, Dick Dale & His Del-Tones [the ferocious guitar-led combo that sparked the instrumental surf-music craze], and whatever else was on the radio at the time. But Carl took drum lessons in high school and passed it off to Dennis. I’d say he was the biggest influence on Dennis’s drumming. He dug the idea and had the inherent musical abilities—but I think Dennis

used the drums mainly as a vehicle to pick up chicks."

The guitarist also recalls Wilson's learning to play a romantic Beethoven piece in an effort to further his amorous career. "When we first started going out on tour," Marks says, "after the show he'd go to the piano on the side of the stage and play 'Moonlight Sonata.' It would attract girls, and they'd sit down next to him on the piano bench."

Out of the box, Dennis played in a delightfully crude teenage way, yet he proved to be a competent timekeeper with a strong four-on-the-floor kick pulse on the Beach Boys' inaugural major-label single, "Surfin' Safari" (a number-fourteen hit in the summer of 1962), as well as on the tracks of the debut LP of the same name. He locks with Brian's—sometimes Carl's—bass and Marks's sturdy rhythm and supports the songs with an unforced, natural feel. Already destined to be the group's heartthrob, Dennis grabs a lead vocal on the ballad "Little Girl (You're My Miss America)." Interestingly, Carl drums on the surf instrumental "Moon Dawg."

SURFIN' USA

The Boys' crackling, glistening "Surfin' USA" hit number three in May 1963, as the last summer of Camelot and JFK's New Frontier came into sight. The nation was buzzing optimistically about a future that held the promise of a moon landing before the end of the decade, and the Beach Boys were suddenly a household name. "Surfin' USA" became the anthem of young Americans who now envisioned their own bright vistas. "Tell the teacher we're surfin'" summed up Dennis's rebellious, thrill-seeking ethos perfectly, and Brian, who shunned the ocean, spun his brother's lifestyle into musical gold. Riding the waves represented a new freedom, even to kids in landlocked Montana, who could fantasize about the promised land of California, reinvented by the boys from Hawthorne.

Alas, Dennis took a spill off a drum riser at a concert and sprained his ankle, causing him to miss the recording of "Surfin' USA." Session man Frank De Vito (who later joined the Baja Marimba Band) met the group at Western Studios in Hollywood and did his best to imitate Dennis's raucous percussive manner. Gigging and success-inspired confidence whipped the Beach Boys into a formidable fighting unit for their second album, titled after the milestone hit. Wilson's drumming is downright fierce, as he drives the guitar-led "Surf Jam" and a cover of Dick Dale's "Let's Go Trippin'" with power, precision, and a true punk-

rock attitude.

"Shut Down" (the "Surfin' USA" B-side and a number-twenty-three charter), one of the group's famed car tunes, presents a fine example of Dennis's style. He boots the band with controlled abandon and shifts the kick pattern on the chorus to great effect. His trademark emphasis on the "&" of beat 2 of the surf snare pattern and his frantic buzz rolls snap this badass song into a tough, danceable frenzy. Simple stuff, but it's Dennis's swagger on the kit and his obsession with drag racing that fuel the track. You can smell the rubber burn.

It's worth noting that the sonic space on Beach Boys records is not typically occupied by loud cymbal work. The hi-hat—or nothing at all—is hit where a crash would typically land, allowing room for the other percussion, rhythm guitars, churning piano, and rich harmonies.

On 1963's *Surfer Girl* album, the first on which Brian is officially credited as producer, Dennis grooves mightily on the taut, rollicking "Catch a Wave" and on "Surfers Rule," another lead vocal of his. He handles the shuffle of "Little Deuce Coupe" as well as ballads like "In My Room" with ease. Yet it was on this LP that a few numbers were embellished by members of the Wrecking Crew, the cream of Los Angeles studio musicians heard on Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" productions and countless other '60s and '70s hits. The drummer was the legendary Hal Blaine, who would play on many future Beach Boys record dates.

By all accounts, Dennis was okay with abdicating his throne to seasoned players like Blaine, Earl Palmer, and Dennis Dragon when needed, in part because it allowed him to play hooky and follow other pursuits. His notes on the back cover of 1964's *All Summer Long* sum it up well: "Maybe I just like a fast life of driving my Sting Ray and XKE, playing my drums, and meeting so many girls and guys (especially girls)." But Dennis drums on the lion's share of the cuts on that classic album, including the group's first number one, "I Get Around." A rare drum solo, "Dennis's Drums," fills out the *Shut Down Volume 2* album, and that's Dennis finessing the unorthodox pattern on "When I Grow Up (to Be a Man)," from *The Beach Boys Today!*

In 1964, the Beach Boys' appearance in the concert film *T.A.M.I. Show* is an eye-opener. It's here that we learn Dennis was a lefty playing a righty four-piece Camco kit, with only one cymbal (in addition to hi-hats) used as a crash/ride. (Photos from this period also show him using Rogers and Gretsch gear.) In terms of sheer

excitement, the group holds its own with James Brown, the Rolling Stones, and other stars on the program. The Boys exude an all-American charm, and Mike Love is an entertaining frontman.

But it's the bushy-blond Adonis, bashing out the savage beat and shaking his locks, who's driving this bus and wreaking havoc with the hysterical females in the audience. He's also the ideal of every boy in the crowd. It didn't matter that he wasn't always a staunch guardian of the tempo once the adrenaline kicked in on stage. This band could not have conquered the world without Dennis's charisma.

While his non-Beach Boys drumming career was trifling, Dennis's playing on a 1963 45 by the Four Speeds, "R.P.M./My Sting Ray," is noted by fans and collectors. The Speeds were a studio pack fronted by Brian Wilson's early collaborator Gary Usher. Dennis's animalistic prowess was also coveted by the likes of the Lovin' Spoonful's John Sebastian and L.A. songwriter P.F. Sloan. Neither deal was ever consummated, but word was out that this guy was a monster.

UPS AND DOWNS

As the '60s swung on, and in the face of the Yank-crushing British Invasion, the Beach Boys had staying power. Brian was rapidly gaining genius status in the biz, and each new release from the band was infused with a magical production or vocal ingredient that blew kids' minds worldwide. But the pressures of writing, arranging, and producing a steady stream of singles and albums amid hopping on planes to honor one-nighters took its toll on the group's leader. Brian suffered a nervous breakdown and retired from touring in December 1964 to put all his energies into painting his aural masterpieces. Adventurous orchestral tracks were cut with the Wrecking Crew, while the boys soldiered on without their big brother—initially with Brian's live sub, Glen Campbell (a prominent guitarist on Beach Boys sessions), followed by Bruce Johnston. The group members would add their vocals when they returned from the road.

Brian knew well what he had in the soulful rasp of his brother's voice and used it to great effect, be it to color the blend of the group harmonies or to highlight a tune's bridge—or to place him front and center. Dennis leads off 1965's *The Beach Boys Today!* with a yearning vocal on a thundering cover of Bobby Freeman's 1958 smash, "Do You Wanna Dance?," reaching number twelve. He also gives an emotion-drenched reading

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- Mike Johnston

Mike Johnston 2-4-5-1



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DENNIS WILSON

of the introspective, lushly arranged ballad "In the Back of My Mind," which is indicative of the artistic direction in which the eldest Wilson was heading.

The innovation and sophistication of "California Girls," the album *Pet Sounds*—the 1966 opus regarded by many, including Paul McCartney, to be an unequalled achievement in pop music—and the revolutionary "Good Vibrations" were generally unappreciated by the emerging American counterculture, which couldn't get past the squeaky-clean image of the group. It didn't seem to matter that the Beach Boys unseated the Beatles as the

number-one "world vocal group" in Britain's 1966 *New Musical Express* poll, or that concert tickets and records continued to sell in Europe. Following Brian's abandonment of the ambitious and much-anticipated *Smile* album and a canceled appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival during 1967's Summer of Love—where the Who, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix marked the changing of the guard—the Beach Boys were suddenly perceived in the States to be hopelessly square.

Through the ups and downs, Dennis fully supported his brother's ideas and

experimentation. "Brian is everything... we're his messengers," the drummer once explained. While his studio participation had largely been limited to vocals in 1966, Dennis nevertheless laid down a heavy backbeat as the Boys grooved together once again on *Wild Honey*, a stripped-down, gritty, R&B-tinged LP released in late 1967.

Dennis immersed himself in the prevailing '60s culture, attending love-ins at L.A.'s Griffith Park and experiencing a spiritual awakening, embracing the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In late 1967, he encouraged the band to follow the guru and to practice Transcendental Meditation (already championed by the Beatles), a philosophy that would inform their music for decades; Mike Love remains an ardent advocate of TM to this day. This influence was apparent on their next album, 1968's light-as-air *Friends*, with Jim Gordon on drums. It's here that Dennis emerges as a talented tunesmith with a pair of gems, both collaborations with the poet Stephen Kalinich: the contemplative "Little Bird" (with a bit of uncredited help from Brian) and the minimalist organ-and-vocal "Be Still." Both were mature, intimate, and as intriguing as they were a surprise to fans—and probably to the other Beach Boys!

During this same period, Dennis was lured into Charles Manson's circle by the madman's bevy of female followers. Wild-eyed aspiring songwriter Manson routinely hustled music-biz types and eyed a contract with the Beach Boys' newly minted Brother label. He actually recorded demos at Brian's home studio and cowrote songs with Dennis. The eerily haunting "Never Learn Not to Love," originally titled "Cease to Exist," landed on *20/20*, the band's final Capitol studio album, released in February 1969. Wilson saw fit to write Manson out of the credits, especially after the maniac commandeered Dennis's house, threatened his child, and squandered more than \$100,000 of his fortune. Purportedly, the upbeat Dennis-penned "Celebrate the News" rejoices in Manson being jettisoned from his life. Mind you, this was all prior to the brutal Manson-orchestrated Tate-LaBianca massacres of August 1969 that shocked the Los Angeles community and rattled the Beach Boys camp.

THE '70S

With that nightmare behind him and a new decade dawning, Dennis was poised for a larger share of the spotlight, with designs on solo projects as well as a bigger role in the musical direction of the Beach Boys. In August 1970, the band

I'm a Natural!

"My name is Gus Conde. I was born in Brazil, but I live in Los Angeles. I started playing drums on a plastic kit at 3 years old, but I got my first real kit at 7. My dad is a drummer as well, so it's in the blood. I play mostly metal, but I'm currently studying more Brazilian music. I play Supernaturals because I love how they sound, no matter what series or size, they all cut through. No matter if I'm playing the most brutal metal or the softest bossa nova... they sound amazing. My favorite is the Constellation because it's extremely versatile. I can use it with samba, baião, and the Constellation ride is the only cymbal I've ever heard that can cut through blast beats when playing live."

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sprung *Sunflower* on the world, a cornucopia that stands as a durable favorite among fans. It's rife with significant writing and production contributions from all of the members, with a heaping helping from Denny: two original compositions, two cowrites, and three lead vocals—not to mention a single. One of the album's stunners is his ode to all women, the achingly gorgeous "Forever." The other DW offerings were funky and contemporary, ushering in a new yet not unbefitting direction for the forward-looking band. Later that year, Dennis's first solo release, "Sound of Free"/"Lady" (the latter song was cowritten with Captain & Tennille's Daryl Dragon), was issued in the U.K.

It was all coming together: a new, loving wife (his second marriage), blossoming talent as a songwriter and producer, plans for a Dennis Wilson album, and a major part in a Universal feature film. Dennis reluctantly accepted the role of "the mechanic" in the *Easy Rider*-inspired road movie *Two-Lane Blacktop*, directed by Monte Hellman and costarring James Taylor and Warren Oates. Although his deep knowledge and passion for cars made for a virtual typecast, Denny

regarded his first, and ultimately last, acting experience as "the hardest work I ever did" and admitted of the box-office flop, "I don't know what it's about." Yet it remains a cult classic.

With an up-to-date, ecologically savvy image, the Beach Boys saw their hip quotient rise in 1971. While several of Dennis's songs didn't make the cut on *Surf's Up*, an LP on which the drummer's presence is decidedly minimal, the band called on him for its next album. Two orchestrated ballads initially pegged for his solo project, "Make It Good" and "Cuddle Up," were considered high points of 1972's *Carl & the Passions: "So Tough."* ("Cuddle Up," another Dragon cowrite, was eventually covered by Captain & Tennille on their blockbuster LP *Love Will Keep Us Together*.)

The rest of the '70s took a different turn for Dennis after he sustained serious injuries from an accident where he plunged his hand through a glass door. Ricky Fataar, of the South African band the Flame, was recruited to keep the beat on record and on stage, while Denny sang in the front line with Mike, Carl, and Al. Other regular drummers who would spell Wilson or share the double-

kit stage setup were Mike Kowalski and Bobby Figueroa. (John Cowsill is the current skinbeater.)

Following a curious and temporary transplant of the band and their families to the Netherlands to record the 1973 LP *Holland*, which boasts two prominent DW songs, the group focused on touring. *Endless Summer*, a compilation of pre-1966 Beach Boys hits, was released in 1974. The double LP went on to sell more than three million copies and awakened a new generation of fans, who flocked to the group's revamped, oldies-heavy show.

With a full beard, a windblown, flowing mane, and rugged magnetism, Dennis was the personification of late-'70s California cool. He fell hard for an expansive sixty-two-foot sailing vessel he named *The Harmony*, which some have called the true love of his life, and spent untold hours refurbishing and maintaining it himself at Marina del Rey. Basking in the glory of his beloved Pacific Ocean, Dennis sailed to Mexico and Hawaii. There was even a drumkit on board.

But his outward appearance as the eternally golden surfer boy betrayed the effects that life in the fast lane was having



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	Redwood City, CA	Gelb Music
September 20	Salt Lake City, UT	Guitar Center
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	Natick, MA	Guitar Center
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September 26	Ft. Worth, TX	Guitar Center
	Atlanta, GA	Guitar Center
September 27	Austin, TX	Guitar Center
	North Charlotte, NC	Guitar Center
September 29	Nashville, TN	Nashville Drum Show with Fork's Drum Closet
	Moline, IL	West Music
	Dallas, TX	Lone Star Percussion
October 4	Reno, NV	Bizarre Guitar
October 6	Pittsburgh, PA	Drum World Pittsburgh
	St. Louis, MO	Mozingo
	Houston, TX	Cymbal Fusion
October 8	Hollywood, CA	Guitar Center
October 9	La Mesa, CA	Guitar Center
	Philadelphia, PA	Guitar Center
October 10	Fountain Valley, CA	Guitar Center
October 11	Milwaukee, WI	Cascio Super Sale
	Fredericksburg, VA	Greenbrier Percussion
October 13	Champaign, IL	Skins-n-Tins Drum Shop
	Harrisburg, PA	Dale's Drum Shop
	Bellevue, WA	Donn Bennett's
October 18	Sacramento, CA	Skip's Music
	Detroit, MI	Guitar Center
October 20	Chicago, IL	Vic's Drum Shop
	Columbus, OH	Columbus Percussion
	West LA, CA	West L.A. Music
October 25	Albuquerque, NM	Grandma's Music
October 27	New Berlin, WI	Cascio Drumfest
	Hollywood, FL	Resurrection Drums
	Mesa, AZ	Milano Music
October 31	Austin, TX	PASIC

DENNIS WILSON

on Dennis. Amid the "Brian's back" hype in 1976 that marked the band's fifteen-year anniversary, the recalcitrant maestro returned to the stage and produced the top-ten *15 Big Ones*, a mixed bag of '50s and '60s covers and some quality new music. But fans were startled to hear Brian's and Dennis's ragged, hoarse singing. Their once-pure voices were now ravaged by chain smoking, drinking, and drugging.

Dennis's hand had since healed, and his return to the drums—on a clear acrylic Zickos kit with gold hardware—found him as vital and commanding as ever. Encores around this time featured him serenading the ladies with "You Are So Beautiful." Legend has it that he contributed anonymously to the writing of the Joe Cocker 1975 smash, which is officially attributed to Billy Preston and Bruce Fisher.

Wilson continued to write and record tracks at the band's Brother Studio in Santa Monica. James Guercio, Chicago's producer, flipped over Dennis's music and signed him to the CBS-distributed Caribou Records (also the Beach Boys' label in the late '70s). Guercio provided the moral support Denny needed to realize the completion of *Pacific Ocean Blue*. Released in September 1977 and coproduced with old friend and collaborator Gregg Jakobson, it was the first solo album by a Beach Boy. There was speculation by many within and outside the confines of the band that this spelled splitsville for the group, especially considering the recent infighting that had been chinking the armor of the organization.

Pacific Ocean Blue is a stark yet polished and textured blast of emotion shot directly from Dennis's heart and seemingly tortured soul. Session players were enlisted, including the renowned Motown bassist James Jamerson and the great Hal Blaine, though Dennis was committed to painstakingly working out many parts himself, even on instruments he had no prior experience with. His raw, scarred vocals made *Blue* all the more dark and personal, and the album stood artistically above any of the Beach Boys' recent offerings. It garnered great reviews, and sales approached a respectable 300,000 copies. A tour was planned but ultimately canceled.

DENNY'S FINAL DAYS

Despite the triumph of *Pacific Ocean Blue*, a budding international profile as a solo artist, and a second project in the works to be called *Bambu* (cuts from these sessions instead made their way onto the Beach Boys' *L.A. (Light Album)*, from 1979), Dennis's time in the sun was slipping away. His tumultuous relationship with model/actress Karen Lamm resulted in a pair of unsuccessful marriages—both to her. A romance bloomed with Fleetwood Mac's Christine McVie, but as Denny's drug and drink intake increased, his voice deteriorated and the once strikingly handsome, fashionable star became scraggly and unkempt. His onstage and offstage behavior became unpredictable and unprofessional. Wilson was eventually banned from playing with the Beach Boys, who were already facing enough intergroup turmoil without him. Dennis would float in and out of their orbit during the next few years.



DENNIS WILSON

In 1981 Wilson met and married Shawn Love, the alleged illegitimate daughter of his cousin Mike. The couple had a son named Gage, but despite his deep love for the child, Dennis just couldn't turn his life around. With *The Harmony* repossessed and Wilson's financial resources depleted, the family moved into a Santa Monica motel. Plagued by alcoholic seizures, Dennis intimated to a friend that he felt he didn't have long to live. Reluctantly, the band took him back for dates in 1983, including a benefit at the Reagan White House. As the year wore on, Dennis was spiraling downward. In September he would play his last show with the Beach Boys.

On December 28, 1983, after staying overnight with friends on their boat at the Marina, Dennis went diving not far from his old nautical digs and discovered framed photos and souvenirs thrown overboard during fights with Karen Lamm. The treasure hunt continued, but the drummer never resurfaced. Just past his thirty-ninth birthday, Dennis Wilson drowned in the waters that finally called him home.

The Beach Boys canceled several months' worth of gigs in mourning of the heart and soul of the group. President Reagan granted a burial at sea, an honor not usually bestowed on civilians. The band moved forward, enduring the loss

of Carl to cancer in 1998. There were numerous additional personnel changes, but Mike Love, a constant since 1961, continued to front the Beach Boys along with Bruce Johnston and a group of kindred-spirit musicians who could lovingly capture the nuances of music that the world seems to continually crave.

MEMORIES

History has generally been kind to the Beach Boys. Okay, the group still tends to be unjustly minimized as lightweights who wrote and performed catchy melodies about cars, girls, and good vibrations, not that there's anything wrong with that. But the hip listener—and there seems to be a lot of them these days—recognizes the depth and artistry of the music. The contribution of each individual member has also been put into its proper context over time.

Dennis emerges as an enigmatic, complex soul. A deeper analysis may reveal that he was searching for the love and acceptance he never felt from his father, whom, he claimed, "beat the crap out of us all the time." Bobby Figueroa says of his friend in Jon Stebbins' biography *Dennis Wilson: The Real Beach Boy*, "He did not like to see people get hurt, and I think it's because he was hurting inside a lot. The heart, the softer side of him—people don't realize how huge that was."

And Dennis the artist, at last, seems to be getting his due. In 2008, Sony/Legacy released a deluxe two-CD edition of *Pacific Ocean Blue*, bolstered by tracks from the unfinished *Bambu* and a lead vocal by Foo Fighters' Taylor Hawkins on an instrumental bed called "Holy Man." Kudos were heaped on the package. It made Amazon's top ten and hit number sixteen in England, and *Mojo*, *Uncut*, and *Rolling Stone* distinguished it as reissue of the year. A biopic dealing with Dennis's last few years, to be called *The Drummer*, is scheduled to begin production this year. One can't help but think that Denny would be gobsmacked.

It's funny—not much was expected from the wild surfer kid when his mom insisted he join the little band her sons were forming with their cousin and a friend. Yet it's hard to imagine the past fifty years without the Beach Boys and the musical gift that soothed, healed, and provided joy to a troubled world. As Brian, Mike, Al, Bruce, and David take the stage this year, the proceedings are blessed by the spirits of Carl and Dennis. These founding members will never be forgotten. As Denny said in 1964, "I wouldn't give up this life for anything in the world. It won't last forever, either, but the memories will."

The advertisement features a central photograph of Dennis Wilson, shirtless and heavily tattooed, playing the drums on stage. The background is dark with ornate, swirling patterns. At the top, the words "GUARANTEED MAYHEM" are written in a large, stylized, white font. Below the photo, there is a signature in white ink. At the bottom, the text "make the switch" is written in a bold, yellow, blocky font. Below that, a pair of Ahead drumsticks is shown horizontally, with the brand name "AHEAD" on the grip and "AHEAD DRUMSTICKS" on the head. At the very bottom, the website "www.AheadDrumSticks.com" is listed, followed by distribution information: "DISTRIBUTED BY BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION UK / WWW.BRDISTRIBUTION.CO.UK" and the phone number "800-547-6401".





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dave KING

As he blazes the trail of a true artist, he proves that a personal voice on the instrument trumps any sense of stylistic borders. *MD* associate editor Michael Parillo joins the **Bad Plus** drummer for a few steps of his winding journey and finds it can be hard to keep up.

Photos by Cameron Wittig

With the Bad Plus, opposites attract. Density and airiness alike mark the twelve-year-old trio's compositions. Blues and free improvisation coexist happily, if not quite peacefully, on stage. Rock covers and twentieth-century classical music sidle up together on record. Lush indie-rock textures float above a swinging foundation. The wacky and the no-nonsense inform the band's aesthetic and image, in equal measure.

Following on the heels of this idea, the group does nothing halfway. And that goes double for Dave King. In the Bad Plus and his many other projects, King displays an absolutely fierce sense of commitment—to the endless possibilities of a simple drumset, to an idea that crops up in real time, to putting the group before the individual, to the search for a distinctive voice, to creative music in general. It's really something to behold when you watch it happen in front of you. It's like seeing a blackboard being scribbled with deep thoughts and being wiped clean in the same instant, over and over and again. If you've never fully understood the idea of acquiring a slew of technical tools in the practice room and then discarding them and remaining wide open in performance, go check out Dave King.

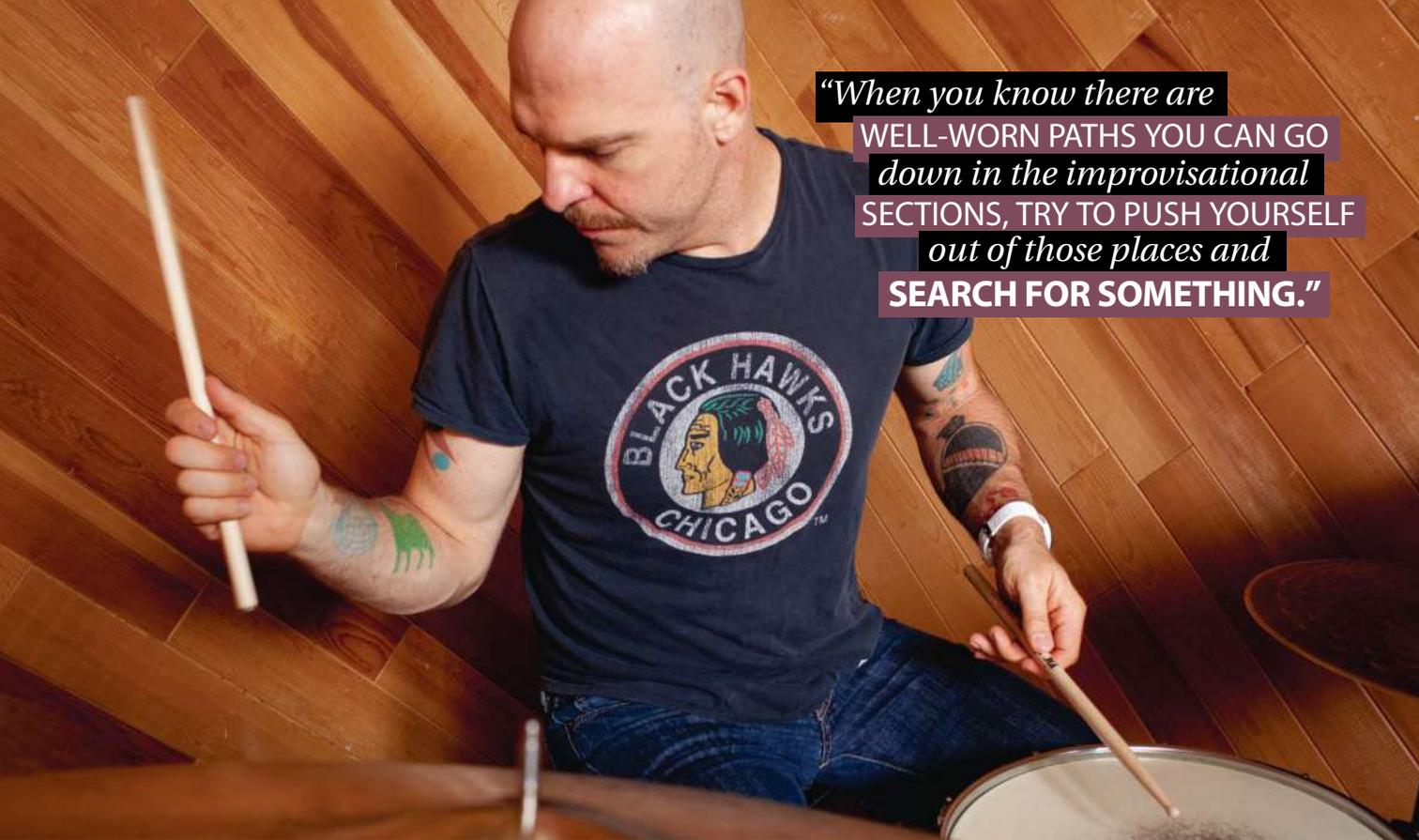
The Bad Plus's brand-new album, *Made Possible*, displays many of the band's hallmarks—droll minimalism ("Pound for Pound"), shape-shifting odd-time head-scratchers ("Seven Minute Mind," "Wolf Out"), avant-garde jazz ("Re-Elect That"), slow blues ("For My Eyes Only"), delicate balladry ("Victoria," written by Paul Motian, a hero of the group's), and a long simmer that finally boils to a froth (the fourteen-minute "In Stitches"). As always, there are surprises, such as brief drum-machine excursions and postproduction mischief with electronics. And King's drum sound is drier and less ambient than on the two preceding albums, 2010's all-originals *Never Stop* and 2009's all-covers *For All I Care*.

If Dave is an empty vessel on stage, ready to receive cargo straight from the interplanetary channel of musical inspiration, he's meticulous and purposeful when he's wearing his composer's hat. With the Bad Plus being a leaderless collective, King, as one-third of the group,

writes roughly one-third of the far-ranging material. Sitting at the piano with his old cassette recorder, he's got a lot to say, also penning tunes for the sax/bass/drums trio Happy Apple, which has been dormant for a while but is planning a return; the indie-rock band Halloween, Alaska; and the Dave King Trucking Company, which finds a batch of swingers improvising in the Americana tradition, with a rollicking debut album, *Good Old Light*, out last year. And in a Herculean feat of concentration and woodshedding, King combined his writing, drumming, and piano playing on 2010's *Indelicate*, first recording his tracks at the keys and then overdubbing at the kit.

Dave tends to use the word *polite* pejoratively, at least in a musical context. And indeed, he's anything *but* polite behind the drums. He crouches, he slouches, he lunges, he jumps out of his seat. (To be fair, he caresses as well.) He plays on cymbal stands, he attacks the kit with his hands, he utilizes every imaginable striking position. Sometimes he grabs a couple of vintage E.T. toy walkie-talkies and presses them into the head of his floor tom as they feed back against one another. He's a hot-blooded guy who has fun playing serious—you might say intellectual—music, and in doing so he naturally welcomes in the listener. All of this stuff is on display in the crisply shot, rich-sounding documentary film *King for Two Days*, directed by Noah Hutton, which lays out a smorgasbord of Dave's music, with five bands, as captured at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis on March 12 and 13, 2010.

King lives near Minneapolis with his wife and two kids, while his Midwest-native Bad Plus bandmates—pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Reid Anderson—have resided in New York City for years. As you'll see in our interview, part of which was conducted after the Plus played a weeklong run at the Blue Note in Manhattan, the drummer keeps himself mighty busy around his hometown when he's not on the road. As *Made Possible* hits, King is also releasing a new solo effort, *I've Been Ringing You*, a standards date with pianist Bill Carrothers and bassist Billy Peterson, recorded in a church in Minneapolis. It's a quiet, haunting album, with Dave using brushes much of the time. As he reacts to his mates' gentle prodding, his playing is sparse, sensitive, and muted...but not polite.



“When you know there are WELL-WORN PATHS YOU CAN GO down in the improvisational SECTIONS, TRY TO PUSH YOURSELF out of those places and SEARCH FOR SOMETHING.”

MD: Playing twelve sets in six nights, like you just did at the Blue Note, do you analyze how the shows are going along the way?

Dave: Any time you're trying to create a vibe in a room for multiple nights, you can definitely compare shows easier than doing one night in a city. But sometimes I feel like I'm not a great judge of what went down. This week there were a few instances where I was trying to pull something new out of it and wasn't sure if it was landing. At

some point, though, you've got to let go. You can't enslave yourself with the idea that you're capable of the ultimate statement at all times. That's just ridiculous. And the more okay you are with the fact that you went for it, and your intent was to do your best and to reach people and to reach inside the music further, then that's what you can do.

MD: What's your goal when you hit the stage? How would you characterize your state of mind?

Dave: When I've seen shows where I feel people are playing safe things they know they can nail—their riffs, or whatever—to me that's an obvious thing. It really prohibits growth on your instrument. So no matter what the circumstances were for the day—the travel, the food you ate, the exercise you got—I want there to be a consistency of putting all of what I have at that moment into the performance.

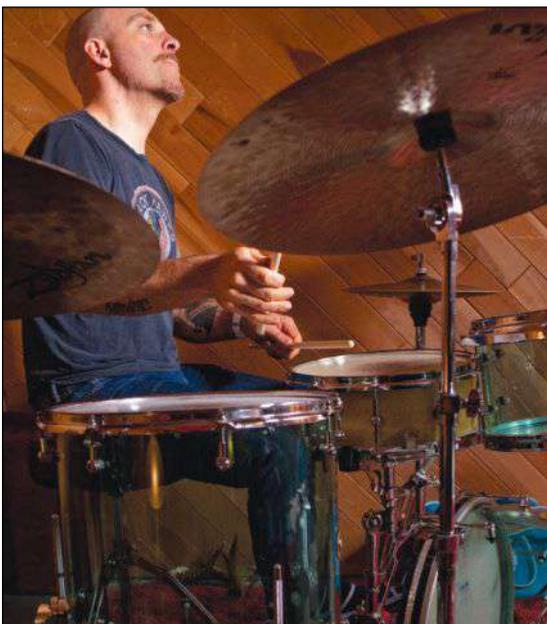
When you know there are these well-worn paths you can go down in the improvisational sections, try to push yourself out of those places and search for something. And I try to make sure that I remember

how blessed we are to have people come out to hear music that's not based in some sort of commercial venture. Maybe something more special will happen tonight than ever before. That might be a naively positive position, but I'd rather not be the cool, composed “assassin of drums.” I want to come in and actually get dirty...and find something.

MD: Be vulnerable too.

Dave: That's one of the unused states of mind for great improvisation or great art in general. You could say that with a tough-guy actor like Steve McQueen there was a vulnerability to the character, like in *Bullitt*, for instance, that you wouldn't see in these indestructible cool dudes—Bruce Willis in *Die Hard*. If you watch *Bullitt*, there's fear and a certain amount of vulnerability, and the performance is that much deeper. And if you take that as a map for all artwork, what a beautiful position to be in, where your intent is strong, your character is strong, you're prepared to do good work, but you're also like, “I don't know a hundred percent what the outcome will be, and I want to share that unknowing with you on some level.” That's a very attractive quality in a human being and a very attractive quality in art.

MD: You seem always ready to give



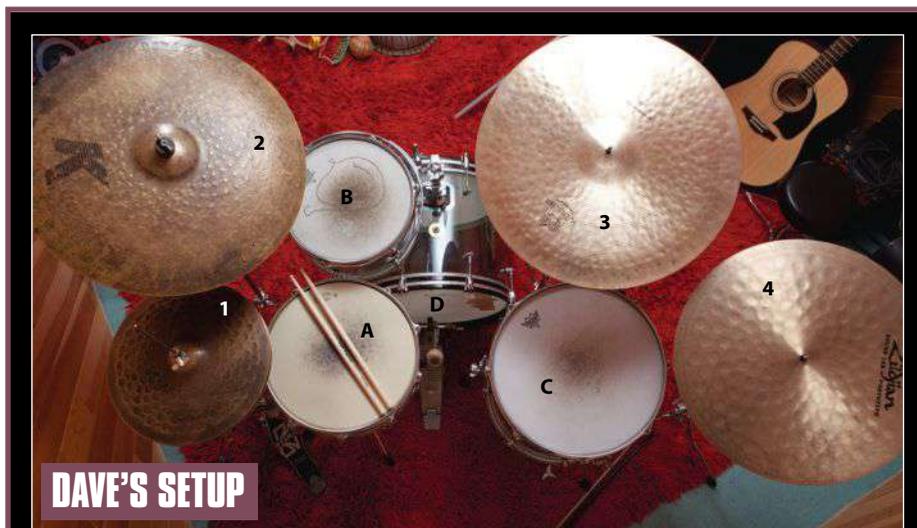
yourself over to the moment, even if you're not sure how.

Dave: Exactly. It's just so important to reach beyond what your instrument is. I could spend the whole night doing all these drummerly riffs, or I could try to play some *music* with this thing and, like you said, just go for it. Of course, you try to temper it. It's not just full-on lunacy, throwing knives at everything all the time. My aesthetic is hopefully getting more and more refined, but I still want to be that searcher, have that sort of innocent quotient, that vulnerable quotient, and I think it's important to allow yourself that space as an improvising musician: "Well, we might not get out of this one alive."

MD: With such a high-wire act, what happens when you fall off? That must happen occasionally.

Dave: Yeah, absolutely. You're doing something *wrong* if you're not messing up every now and again. This isn't a Broadway play—this is an undulating, living thing. You're improvising or playing very complex music, but you don't want to remind everyone every minute of the cerebral level. You just want to have this stuff connect with people on whatever level they can receive it and show that it's music that can be framed in joy and outreach energy.

What the Bad Plus tries to do is show our entire life experience over the course of the evening. So you might have some tunes that are based in minimalism followed by something that's incredibly dense. And these aren't just strange-bedfellows concepts; it isn't like contradictory art all the time. It's more like trying to show the avant-garde songbook. You've got some



Drums: Ellis acrylic (also plays an Ellis maple kit)

- A. 5 1/2x14 wood snare
- B. 9x12 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum

King uses larger bass drums (22", 24", 26") for rock gigs and sessions, and his other snares include a 5 1/2x14 wood WFL from the late '50s and models by TP Drums and Head Drums.

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador snare batter, Coated Ambassador rack tom batter and bottom, Coated Emperor floor tom batter and Coated Ambassador bottom, and Coated Ambassador bass drum batter

Hardware: Yamaha canvas-strap bass drum pedal from the '80s, various lightweight stands

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" K Custom Special Dry hi-hats
- 2. 22" K ride with three rivets
- 3. 22" K Constantinople Medium Thin Low ride
- 4. 20" Flat ride (prototype)

Sticks: Vic Firth SD4 Combo wood-tip sticks and retractable wire brushes

Miscellaneous: Assorted Fisher-Price vintage toys, E.T. walkie-talkies, and kids' voice changers



blues, you've some things in some sort of indie-rock zone, you've got modern jazz, you've got dense math, you've got very simple minimalism, and you've got all these other things. Also the willingness to play the 1 and not have to be so hip, over the bar all the time or super-dense polyrhythmic all the time.

I don't want to just appropriate

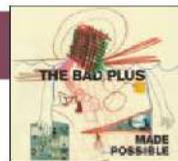
RECORDINGS

The Bad Plus Suspicious Activity?, For All I Care, Made Possible /// **Happy Apple** Youth Oriented, Happy Apple Back on Top /// **Dave King** Indelicate, I've Been Ringing You /// **Dave King Trucking Company** Good Old Light /// **Craig Taborn** Junk Magic /// **Buffalo Collision** Duck /// **Halloween, Alaska** Champagne Downtown /// **The Gang Font** Feat. Interloper /// **Bill Carrothers** The Electric Bill

INSPIRATIONS

John Coltrane Live at Birdland (Elvin Jones) /// **Paul Motian With Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano** Motian in Tokyo (Paul Motian) /// **Keith Jarrett** Fort Yawuh (Paul Motian), Standards Live (Jack DeJohnette) /// **Led Zeppelin** Houses of the Holy (John Bonham) /// **The Power Station** The Power Station (Tony Thompson) /// **The Police** Ghost in the Machine (Stewart Copeland) /// **Bill Frisell** Lookout for Hope (Joey Baron) /// **Rush** Signals (Neil Peart) /// **Django Bates** Summer Fruits and Unrest (Martin France) /// **Dio** Holy Diver (Vinny Appice) /// **Ornette Coleman** Science Fiction (Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins) /// plus '80s Tony Williams and anything with Jim Keltner or Steve Jordan





MUSIC KEY "POUND FOR POUND"

open	C.C.	R.C.
hi-hat	×	×
bd	×	×
sd	×	×
hh	×	×
ghost		
w/ foot	Note	

There's a lot of nuanced, melodic drumming going on in this opening cut. An excerpt from the outro features several variations of the main 8th-note-to-sextuplet groove. (5:22)



"SEVEN MINUTE MIND"

As with many tunes on *Made Possible*, there's more than one time-signature grouping that *could* work here. The following transcription is the clearest version that indicates King's beginning/ending points throughout the tricky opening section. Note how the hi-hat melts away from the downbeats after the first two measures and then reappears in measures 7 and 8. (0:17)

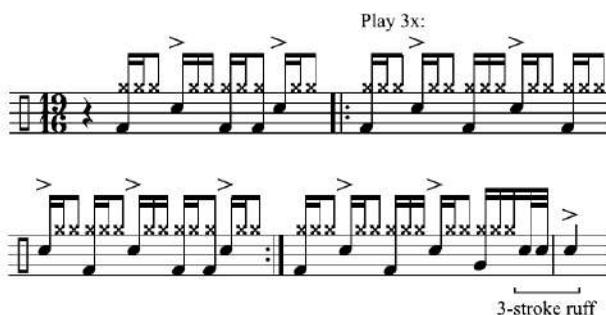


"WOLF OUT"

Once you wrap your head around what's going on in this track, King's complex pattern becomes much more playable. Try not to let the first bar of 7/16 throw you off. (0:00)

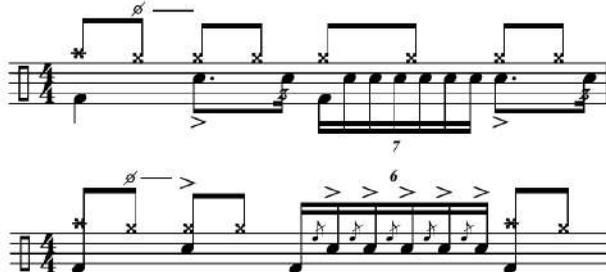


Here's a section from later in "Wolf Out." Note how the snare backbeats shift over the barlines in measures 2 and 3. This creates a clever sleight-of-hand groove. (5:43)



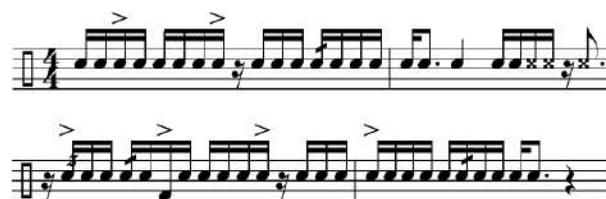
"SING FOR A SILVER DOLLAR"

These two open-hi-hat rock sections feature interesting choices made on beat 3. In the first example, the bass drum and snare team up to execute a septuplet leading to a resolving crash on beat 4. In the second example, King chooses a thunderous flammed sextuplet that starts with the bass drum. (1:19, 2:13)



"IN STITCHES"

In this fourteen-minute piece, King reveals his Paul Motian influence with a free-flowing, melodic, and cyclical interpretation of the time. This four-bar snare phrase interacts with the piano in a delicate way to suggest many possible layers of time. (4:37)



As the mood intensifies, King doubles the pace with 32nd notes and superimposes an odd-meter pattern on top of the steadily rolling piano groove. (5:49)

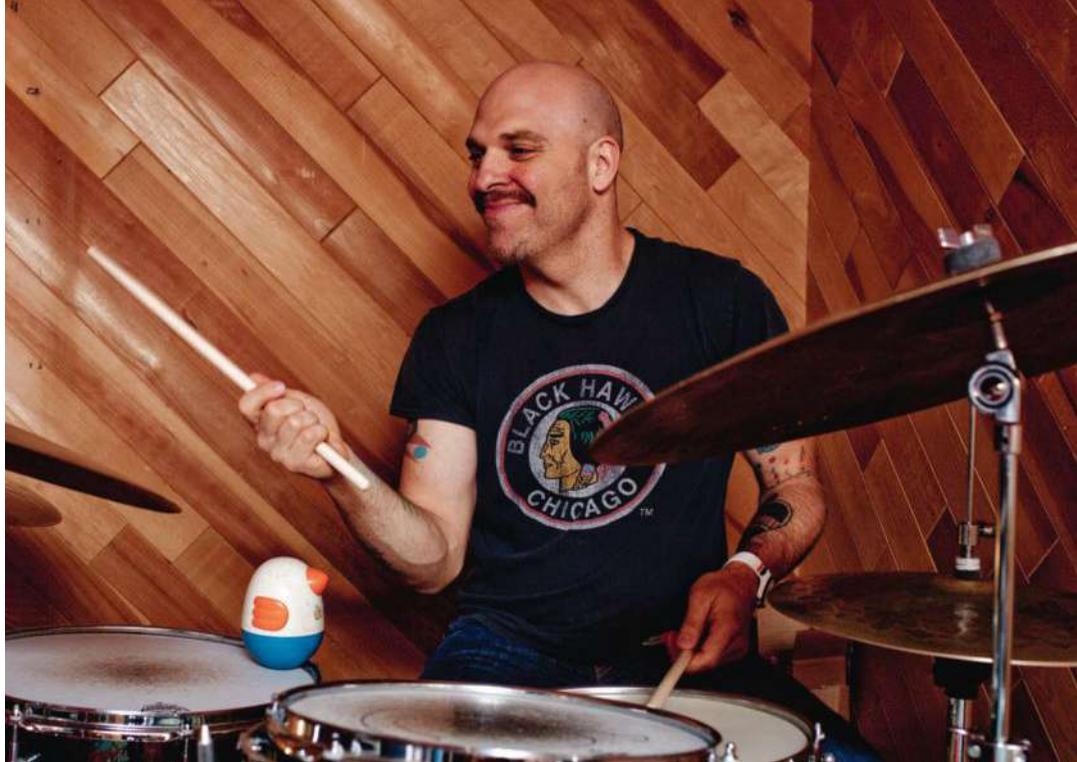


things like a tourist: “Well, I worked on my Latin chops for years....” I want to filter the whole thing through *me*. How do I embody these things in a way that’s honest and true to my life experience?

There were periods in my life where I really had to dismantle the technique and dismantle every idea I had in order to find my own thing. I have recordings from my early twenties where I sound so much like Paul Motian. I listen back and I’m like, “Man, if I would’ve just kept playing like that, all the guys that couldn’t have Paul, maybe they would’ve called me!” [laughs] But I had to wreck that construct—just like everyone has to kind of wreck their idols. I had to destroy my influences, almost violently. I had to go through a period where I was just playing as dense and loud and loony as I could, in my mid to late twenties. And I tried to come out the other side with some sort of new perspective and new tools.

MD: It seems you don’t have to think about that anymore. You can play something that might recall Paul Motian, and so be it.

Dave: Exactly. But hopefully it’s still colored with my own experience, and you can enjoy your referential treatment of things. I believe in the idea that your generation is your generation—it has



the weight of any generation. The guys you idolized, in their own generation they were scuffling to get heard and they were judging each other harshly and they were getting two-star reviews in *DownBeat*. And then the remastered version thirty years later gets five stars! But you gotta remember that in the trenches of your own generation, you have to be a part of it, and you have to drop yourself down on it hard sometimes and be willing to take the shit that you’re gonna get for that.

MD: We were just talking about the range of things you’ll get at a Bad Plus show. Who writes your set lists?

Dave: We write them together. We make up a different one almost every night.

MD: You always want to present a varied experience?

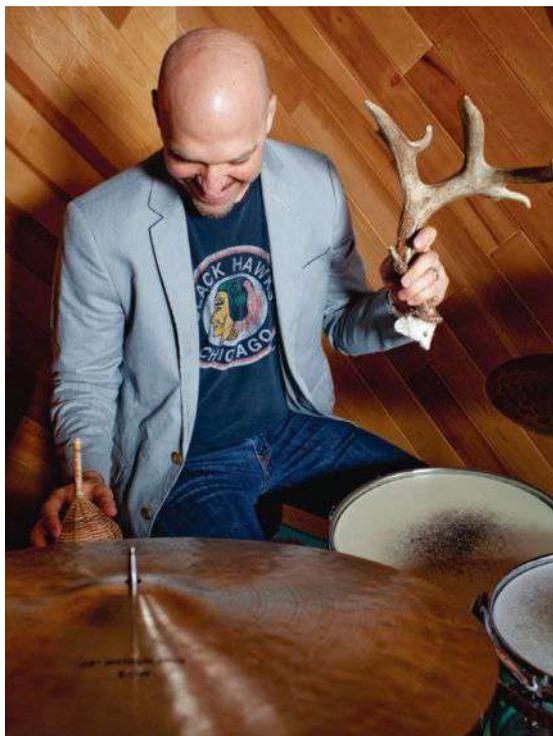
Dave: Absolutely—and not just a cafeteria experience: “Here’s a sampling of jazz....” It’s gotta have that thread of *our* language. It’s not this self-consciously decided-upon thing: “And after that we shall play a backbeat, and after that we shall make sure that a free-jazz piece occurs....” It’s much more like: What’s the common thread of all this stuff? The common thread is that each is approached with the same frequency level, the same need to push and pull, the same sort of wanting to change the shape from

night to night.

MD: The Bad Plus is just one aspect of your career, yet it’s the project that’s earned the most attention.

Dave: Before the Bad Plus hit, I was focused on Happy Apple and was doing a couple rock things and playing jazz with different people, and I had spent time in New York and Los Angeles before I settled back in Minneapolis because my wife and I wanted to try to have children. When the Bad Plus trajectory went so quickly—partly, of course, because the band was always based in New York, and we also had this sort of iconoclastic approach—I felt there was a hand of fate that was a part of it. Because I did feel like the Bad Plus was capable of fulfilling a lot of the aspects of my work. The jazz, the classical, the rock, original music to covering music to doing whatever.

I feel like no matter what I do, the Bad Plus is the most complete statement of my playing. If you’re going to come see me play, I like that you’re gonna see me in that band. I also feel that being in a piano trio helped me refine some of my approaches. A piano trio’s got a peculiar dynamic. You have this repertoire that has to use these wild dynamic swings, and you have to pull a lot of punches—there’s a big wallop in the music, and you have to learn how to make that wallop feel like it’s bigger than it is. That’s why a lot of our records are mixed very loudly and



kind of abstractly.

We can play very softly, but we also get up there into the white-noise decibels. It took me a few years to *really* feel comfortable controlling that repertoire, figuring out how to play with that wallop intent. Over the years I've had people say how intense the music feels even when we're way down low, and that's something that all three of us have really developed. You're not just backing up a piano with brushes—you've got to be in the

ferent schools of thought, from simple to complex, and be able to play them with my touch. I was encouraged by Ethan, because with the music I compose for the Plus, I play it and teach him. He usually wants to learn things by rote, by ear, in order to *know* it.

MD: Was working on *Indelicate* maddening at some point?

Dave: Yeah, just shedding that music for a year. I didn't want to embarrass myself in the face of all these amazing pianists. I'm not claiming to be some

an abstract way of a wolf pack descending on something—the way it builds, and these descending tones rows that are very abstract, and there's this sort of feverish pitch to the whole thing. At the same time, Ethan and I were laughing about the film *Teen Wolf*. There's a great scene with the drama coach, where he's telling him to get in his wolf costume. He goes, "Wolf out; do whatever you need to." I always thought that was great. And in a way, when you're performing

"The Bad Plus tries to show our entire life experience over the course of the evening. And these aren't just strange-bedfellows concepts."

IT'S MORE LIKE TRYING TO SHOW THE AVANT-GARDE SONGBOOK."

mix, throwing down and having dialogues, so you've got to figure out a new way of touching your instrument. I've seen so many piano trios where the drums are still in this polite zone. The Bad Plus doesn't work if you're just doing this rational, drummer-with-a-pianist vibe.

So I look at the Bad Plus as the most challenging and the most rewarding. It's the thing that introduced me to a larger audience, and it's very group oriented; the trust level is very high. I've always looked at it as making sense that it took off the way it did, because I felt like it was the most freeing.

COMPOSITION

MD: When you sit down at the piano to write, do you just start looking for things?

Dave: Yeah. I've always written music, and it ends up being something where you try not to analyze it when it comes. Some pieces come right away, and some are chipped away at for months at a time. It's always great to have those personal relationships with the musicians that you're writing for—it can really direct your writing and focus it.

I've played piano for years, and that was the basis for the *Indelicate* record—to have this series of through-composed pieces that encompass dif-

ferent schools of thought, from simple to complex, and be able to play them with my touch. I was encouraged by Ethan, because with the music I compose for the Plus, I play it and teach him. He usually wants to learn things by rote, by ear, in order to *know* it. It was that experiment of having someone play the way they play on both instruments together. The piano tracks were difficult, and then the drum tracks went like *that*. [snaps] It was the classic thing where I'm like, "Well, I know what my day job is."

MD: Almost every drummer who writes says drums are the last thing they think of.

Dave: It's true. "Wolf Out," a new Bad Plus tune of mine, has all these skipped beats and all this crazy stuff. I was working on it, playing it on piano for so long, and I sat down at the drumset and went, "Wait...that's harder than I thought it was gonna be!"

MD: "Maybe I *won't* show it to the fellas...."

Dave: Exactly. [laughs] I'm still not a hundred percent comfortable playing it on the drums. I'm still not as comfortable playing it on the drums as I am playing it on piano.

MD: So what's that title all about, "Wolf Out"? You have a knack for coming up with great titles.

Dave: All the tunes have some sort of cinematic quality to them, and there was something that reminded me in

improvised music and you've got to get in there and just deal, you almost have some sort of werewolf transformation. You can't just walk on stage and be everybody's normal guy. You've gotta kick it.

MAINTENANCE

MD: When you've been playing a lot and then suddenly you have a week off, what do you do to stay in shape?

Dave: When I get off the road I work a lot in Minneapolis in terms of rehearsing my music with people, and I do play some shows in the Twin Cities with my groups, like the Trucking group or my rock band Halloween, Alaska. I also have a project with the bassist of Hüsker Dü, Greg Norton, called the Gang Font. I came home from Europe Saturday night, and Sunday I had a show. So I don't come back and not get on the drums for two weeks at a time. And I do try to get on my drums down in the basement every now and again.

You're talking about drumming shape, but I also work out to stay in shape myself. I put on twenty pounds between the birth of my first child and about four or five years ago—my "baby weight." So I started to get back into shape and have been taking it very seriously in terms of keeping my energy together. Touring is so physical, just humping the cymbals through

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DAVE KING

airports and all these things, and I felt like I really had to prepare to play this music till I'm an old man. Your value as a jazz musician almost goes up the older you get—it's the exact opposite of rock. So I go to the gym every other day, and I do yoga and things like that.

I don't have a real regimented practice routine like I used to. I spent so many years working on technique. I would play freeform but also have a routine of working on independence and the same things a lot of people do. At this point I just want to play the music. I feel it's much more important to keep my channels open for improvising.

MD: So you never suddenly find your hands feeling stiff and in need of loosening up?

Dave: No. In fact, I don't warm up before shows, ever. I try to keep my mind off the idea that there's some sort of physicality. I try to prepare myself more by having good energy or eating right than I do thinking about stiffness or my muscles or carpal tunnel or all these things that can come get you. I try not to allow myself to think about the physical aspects and what

could misfire. I want it to come from me; I don't want to think about how it's coming from me. I don't want the temperature to be right and I have to have the right shoes on; I don't want to hold the drumsticks before the show, nothing. I just want to go up there and pick up the sticks and let the grids appear.

MD: That makes perfect sense, once you say it. You sound that way. You seem to just reach back for what you need at any given time.

Dave: I try to leave room for some drama and to not be nailing it sometimes, to try to find some shit that I don't know if I can pull off. And sometimes I can't pull it off. So to hear that makes me feel great, because I'm trying to connect to an experience that I'm unsure of sometimes.

COVERS

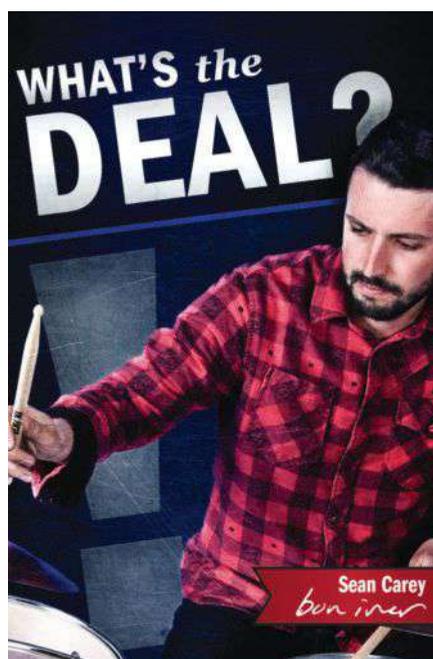
MD: The Bad Plus got attention for your genre-crossing covers, like "Iron Man" by Black Sabbath. Your last two albums are practically all original; have you been playing covers live?

Dave: Not really—sometimes for an encore. We've always been almost an all-original band. We chose some repertoire that wasn't original based solely on wanting to do something else. Reid and I had talked for years about taking rock music we loved and deconstructing it in a way that wasn't necessarily like the Ahmad Jamal Trio would've: "We've got to put jazz harmony on this...." Instead we wanted it to be its own universe. And then, when we got so much attention for it, I think it was because we tried to take it someplace that other jazz guys hadn't quite taken it. Even though it wasn't a new idea, what we were doing had some other juice. The rock people and the jazz people noticed.

But audiences were always calling out for our tunes too. The perspective in the press made it look like when you see us you're gonna hear twelve covers of rock songs, when all you ever really heard was two or three a night.

MD: And you premiered the Bad Plus version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at Duke University last year. Was learning that a real ordeal?

Dave: It was a very consuming experience for me. It's obviously a thorny rhythm piece, and appropriating it on drumset was a challenge. We do play it down; we



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don't jam on it. But it's definitely Bad Plus-ified in its dynamic scope. You've just got to sacrifice certain things for other things when you've got only three instruments that weren't made to do it.

MD: Did you take an organic approach to applying it to the drumset?

Dave: There were a couple moments in the score that just had to be appropriated, like a timpani moment and some other things that we felt we had to represent. But a lot of the time I was just inventing my own score along with the score. I worked with the two-piano score. When you examine music that's been so influential to twentieth-century music, you really do draw parallels from what you know how to do and what you've gleaned from it unknowingly.

And you've got to deal. You've got twenty-some movements, and there are several movements that to me sound like a Bad Plus tune. I was able to make it kind of self-referential a lot of the time—draw this parallel here, and make this come out there—at first being really intimidated and then letting go and trying to make something happen.

MD: Do you use the score when you perform it?

Dave: I don't. The other guys use the score, but I absolutely needed to memorize it. We rehearsed it at every sound-check for nine months, and then we booked several New York rehearsals where I flew in and did three or four ten-hour days. It was a drag a lot of the time, I have to say. It made a real dent in us. That's essentially what made us have to get all that *Made Possible* music together later than we would have—*The Rite* dominated us from the late summer of 2010 to the debut in March 2011. We didn't get the chance to work on any of our own music, and then we started to put together ideas, and we recorded *Made Possible* in November.

SONGS

MD: Does your ideal music include composition in an improvisational setting?

Dave: Yes. Sometimes, when you hear really great improvising, the composition isn't as engaging. I like the idea of songs. And I think that's one of the things that distinguishes the Bad Plus

from a lot of modern jazz—we're coming from that tradition of structure, like Duke Ellington or Monk or something, where you've got this really strong song aesthetic that you improvise with. You don't just put together some neat harmony and some really personal intervallic stuff that creates a situation for a long saxophone solo or piano solo.

For me, a record like *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman*, that's just the best jazz record! There are great songs and great iconoclastic playing through the songs. Elvin Jones isn't playing polite shit; he's still so clearly Elvin Jones, and it's still the Coltrane quartet.

Songcraft in modern improvised music is so important. Ultimately that's where I feel the most at home, even if it's free jazz. We use all those tools, from exact harmonic and rhythmic forms to free music to no improvising to pure improvising, and all the while the focus is to make some compelling song out of it.

MD: What's an example from a Bad Plus album of no improvising?

Dave: "Anthem for the Earnest," on

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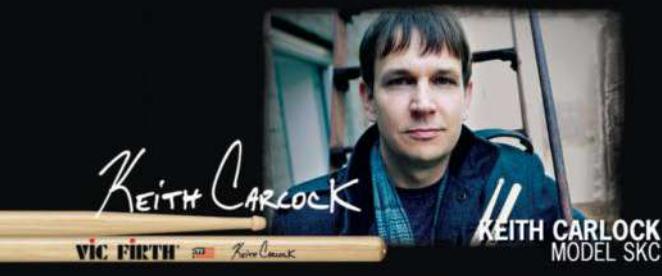
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DAVE KING

Suspicious Activity? And there's *very* little improvising on "Wolf Out." The only section is the "cavalcade" piano solo, and Ethan's just playing over the ostinato. That's essentially just an homage to Cecil Taylor that goes on for about thirty seconds. The rest of the tune is totally through-composed.

MD: I wanted to mention "Anthem for the Earnest," which you wrote. That tune feels cyclical in the sense that after the progression is established, you can get lost in it, no longer feeling where it starts and ends. The band has a few pieces like that.

Dave: Almost like the music becomes some surreal ecosystem of its own. That's a great point. If I had to say one thing, it's that I naturally want to avoid getting into the heavy nuts and bolts of these things, because I do like mystery. But I don't want to be known as just the esoteric sound cloud out there when all of these techniques are being used. It's a heavy technical load, and it is a major part of the music.

It's really fun to have it just surround you and try to create an experience for you—it's like a David Lynch film, or a dream. If I could wave my pretentious stick, that's one of the goals for me as a composer. It's almost like Paul Klee's little paintings that are so deeply complex, they're their own universe—but they're these *little* things. I love the idea of having this little circus going on around you, where you're not quite sure what's happening but you're totally smiling and you're in there with it.

MD: And that tune is nice and simple. It's not as if you're being flogged by complexity; you're just swimming in it.

Dave: Yeah, and then a tune like [*Never Stop's*] "My Friend Metatron" is a super-dense, abstract rhythm. These are modern texts to improvise with, and for me it's always like: Can it feel good too? There's nothing worse than when you've got these sort of hypergrids in front of you and everyone's gripping them so hard, and you're sort of like, "Check out what we can do; check out what we understand." For me it's still gotta be able to sing, and it's gotta be loving on some level. It's like, is this coming from an aggressive intellectual standpoint, or is this coming from a place of possibilities and loving, tender gifts? [laughs] I know it sounds really lame, but you can get metaphysical with it. The Bad Plus is a band that likes to toy with that and at the same time also lay in something so simple and challenge you to go the other direction completely and be okay with them both.

MD: You're almost like a rock band that's been together forever, in terms of group mind and breathing together.

Dave: I appreciate that, and that's the goal. That's what we've always felt was missing from the jazz of today—the real working-band relationship. People can say, "I have a band, and we play seventeen nights a year..." No, we're talking 170 nights a year, for twelve years. You start to develop a thing. Hopefully it's like that experience of seeing Led Zeppelin in their heyday, or whatever—no one can do this but us. Whether or not it's good. I'm not saying, "No one can do this *amazing* stuff but us." [laughs] You might not dig it, but you can't sub it out.



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BERNARD PURDIE: The Hitmaker

Bernard "Pretty" Purdie has played on enough tracks to overstuff an iPod. His drumming is, in fact, pretty. And nasty too. Somehow his groove dances nimbly while simultaneously being anchored, deep fried, and stone solid. How can a beat be so weighty and so light at the same time? It's Purdie's irresistible combined pocket of commanding force, nuance, and forward locomotion that shakes butts of all ilk. The drummer's enormous, real-deal output has helped define what the great American R&B-rooted groove feels and sounds like.

Purdie was born on June 11, 1939, and in 1959 left his native Elkton, Maryland, in search of his drumming destiny in New York City. The week he arrived, the confident youngster landed a recording gig with Mickey & Sylvia of "Love Is Strange" fame. His solid time, funky R&B/soul feel, and big, fat sound led to a rapidly snowballing studio schedule.

Along the way were stacks of classics, including James Brown's "Ain't That a Groove," propelled by an irresistible minimalist shuffle with a cracking rimclick on beat 4, which is contrasted by explosive strokes on the horn breaks. This was quickly followed by JB's biggest hit of '66, the torrid 12/8 classic "It's a Man's Man's Man's World."

Another slice of pure Purdie-ism is the drummer-required listening "Memphis Soul Stew," on saxman King Curtis's *Live at Fillmore West* (1971). Curtis is featured "rapping" over a bass line while introducing essential groove ingredients: "Now I need a pound of fatback drums!" Purdie comes slamming in, and it's hair-raising funk heaven throughout. That stellar rhythm section, dubbed the Kingpins, was an in-demand presence at Atlantic Records. During the late '60s and early '70s, Purdie was also a regular at CTI Records, working with Grover Washington Jr. and George Benson.

Spanning a forty-five-year career, the groove master's recording résumé includes Hank Crawford, John Lee Hooker, Ray Charles, Nina Simone, Al Green, B.B. King, Arthur Prysock, Don Covay, the Coasters, Laura Nyro, Teddy Pendergrass, Dakota Staton, Joe Cocker, Paul Butterfield, Duane Allman, Cat Stevens, LaVern Baker, Jackie Wilson, David "Fathead" Newman, Daryl Hall and John Oates, Michael Bolton, Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Mongo Santamaria, Bette Midler, Chuck Jackson, Gil Scott-Heron, Bob Marley, and Peter, Paul & Mary. As a leader the drummer has also released several discs that are a joy for any fan of the perfect pocket.

Although Purdie is best known as an R&B drummer with excursions into blues, rock, and pop, his extensive track record also includes major jazz names like Herbie

Hancock, Miles Davis, Jimmy Smith, Quincy Jones, Gary Burton, Yusef Lateef, Herbie Mann, Freddie Hubbard, Shirley Horn, Les McCann, Eddie Harris, Gato Barbieri, Stanley Turrentine, Charlie Rouse, Roy Ayers, Branford Marsalis, Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler, Larry Coryell, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Randy Brecker, Duke Ellington, Gene Ammons, and Lou Donaldson. And in the early '80s Bernard recorded and toured with the legendary Dizzy Gillespie.

One of Purdie's career landmarks is his tenure with Aretha Franklin, helming multiple classic sides from 1970 to 1975. Go directly to *Aretha Live at Fillmore West*, one of the greatest in-concert discs ever. (The LP was recorded at the same 1971 shows as the aforementioned King Curtis album.) Purdie is volcanic here, along with Curtis, his fellow Kingpins, and the Memphis Horns. From the downbeat it's fever pitch, with the drummer hitting a funky rocket-

maxes with Purdie's classic syncopated kicker of a drum break. The drummer really lets us know, as the song says, "What it is, what it is...."

The mid to late '70s offered Purdie a high-profile outlet with the perfect groove-grail seekers, Steely Dan. Two tracks in particular became the gold standards of his signature "Purdie shuffle"—"Home at Last" and "Babylon Sisters." Between hi-hat strokes and ghosted snare notes, Purdie keeps the triplets popping while throwing down a backbeat on 3, creating a super-funky yet rolling half-time feel. Although much copied, the pattern remains unique in the creator's hands.

Laying down the law as Purdie does demands colossal confidence. And Bernard is famously outspoken regarding his drumming contributions. Strutting into a gig with his big-brimmed hat and even bigger grin, this guy means business. But watch the imposing figure land the first 1, and it all becomes clear: *This is a big kid!* He beams as if discovering the joy of the groove for the first time. And that's what we feel. It's why we love rhythm and great records.

There's the legendary studio lore of Purdie arriving at sessions and mounting banners declaring, "You've Done It! You've



Paul Jonason

"Bernard is one of the nastiest groove machines on the planet," says 2012 Pro Panelist Matt Chamberlain. "I'm sure his groove has created babies and made people drive off the road. He's one of those people that could play on anything and it would immediately feel amazing. Genius!"

tempo "Respect" and then laying down a killer shuffle on "Don't Play That Song," followed by a serious swamp backbeat that segues into hyper-gospel on "Spirit in the Dark."

Although Purdie cites "Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)" as one of his personal favorite tracks with the Queen of Soul, there's one Aretha hit that the groover undeniably owns: the fiery, pumping "Rock Steady" (1971). That track's hard-charging 16th-note funk groove cli-

Hired the Hitmaker, Bernard Purdie!" He explains this as a reaction to the injustice of early recording days, when session greats remained uncredited. Fair enough. After four decades of tracking, Purdie's still laying it down, spreading the groove via records, concerts, and samples, and even on stage in the recent Broadway revival of *Hair*. The strength of his legacy remains as solid as his backbeat. Bernard Purdie, "You've done it!"

Jeff Potter





Maximize Your Practicing

Get the Most From Whatever Time You Have by Jeremy Hummel

It seems that now more than ever we live in a world where it's a challenge to find the time to do anything outside our daily responsibilities. Whether we're a student, a parent, a businessperson, or even a professional musician, our fast-paced lives make it more and more challenging to improve at the craft of drumming. In this article, I'd like to address how to maximize practice time.

The first step in figuring out how to make the most of your practice time is to ask yourself, "What am I trying to get better at?" Take a close look at where you are as a drummer and which concepts interest you the most. Playing the drums is supposed to be fun, yet I maintain that there's a definite difference between freestyling and practicing. Let's take a look at each.

FREESTYLING VERSUS PRACTICING

Freestyling is when you sit behind the drums and play whatever happens to come into your mind. This can be therapeutic and perhaps give you a sense of well-being, because for the most part the ideas you play are within your comfort zone. Most people, however, tend to spend too much time freestyling.

Practicing, on the other hand, is spending time working on the things that you cannot do well or that need more refinement. People sometimes avoid practicing because they don't want to risk not sounding good to themselves or others. Without any real discipline or organization to your practice routine, though, advancement will be limited.

Here's a common scenario. You're working on a page from a book in a slow, methodical manner. There's one particular spot you can't seem to get

past. When frustration sets in, what you do next is usually one of three things: You maintain focus and continue practicing in the same manner (the least common), you try to play the phrase faster, or you start to freestyle. The point is that often freestyle playing results from impatience. Many people in our society have a seriously short attention span. When I discuss practicing in clinics, people often say, "My intentions are good, but after the first ten minutes I get frustrated and play something different or start thinking about something else."

There are a number of books available that deal with staying focused. Two that I really like are *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle and *The Art of Practicing* by Madeline Bruser. The best mantra to keep in mind is "be here now."

FOCUS AND SIMPLIFY

Once you decide which areas of your playing you wish to improve, it's important to be disciplined and not stray from that. I recommend picking no more than two or three things at a time. With all the media that's now available (Web videos, DVDs, books, and so on), it's very easy to get sidetracked and overwhelmed. It's wonderful to use these tools as resources for inspiration. Yet to truly get better, it's paramount to have a clear vision of what you're trying to achieve.

Consider the phenomenon where one Web video leads to another. It's like going on a cruise with multiple stops. Each place you visit is great and has inspiring qualities, but you never really get to know any of them because the experiences are short-lived. Sporadic practice routines have the same effect.

If you have an abundance of practice time and many things to explore, try setting goals to get through more material. We all want instant gratification, but the reality is that the things we cherish most in life require much attention and work. Remember, practice time is a privilege, not a chore.

A technique I find helpful in my own practicing is to remove all distractions. I value the time I have to work on my craft, so I turn off my computer, cell phone, and anything else that could steal my focus. If there are other people in your house when you want to practice, ask them if you can remain uninterrupted for that time period. You could simply say, "Please give me this time, and I'm all yours when I'm finished."

SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Short-term goals are things you can achieve within a brief period of time. These would include anything you need to work on in order to sustain a gig. I've read countless articles in which professional drummers, when asked what they're practicing, say, "Whatever is going on at the time." In other words, if you have a fill-in gig, audition, or recital coming up in two weeks, preparation for that is a short-term goal.

Long-term goals are works in progress—concepts you chip away at over time. Examples of these are advanced independence and coordination, left-foot clave, or working through a particularly challenging method book. It's important to contribute to both short- and long-term goals at each practice session whenever possible.

The reason why long-term goals need to be addressed with frequency

is because they often involve developing muscle memory, both physical and mental. For example, when you learned to ride a bike without training wheels, you had to develop your sense of balance. The process is expedited if you work at it each day, rather than once every three or four days, because it doesn't feel like starting all over again.

THE ART OF SACRIFICE

Students often ask, "How long should I practice?" I remind them that it's about quality rather than quantity. Some musicians may claim to put in three or four hours a day. That sounds great, but I often wonder how much of that time is spent productively. I feel one hour of disciplined practice each day can help you achieve your goals.

In life, you must ask yourself, "What is truly important to me?" When I encounter students who claim they don't have enough time to practice, I ask them to outline a weekly schedule of their current activities, from the time they wake up until they go to bed. Together, we usually find that there are things that are not so important, which can either be cut down or eliminated to free up time for practicing.

This is especially true for younger musicians. I understand that kids need to be kids, but the amount of time spent playing video games and watching television can be startling. It would be much more beneficial to use your time productively, with an activity that nurtures your mind, body, and soul, even if it doesn't include drumming. Use your youth to your advantage. The older you get, the more responsibilities you will have.

Improving as a musician is not a part-time task. Many people don't have the disposition to continually work at something, regardless of how much they think they enjoy it. Educators see students who start with the best of intentions, only to realize they don't possess the desire or the time required to truly progress. There's a great book called *Outliers*,

in which author Malcolm Gladwell repeatedly mentions the "10,000-hour rule," claiming that the key to success in any field is, to a large extent, a matter of practicing a specific task for that long. My mention of this book is not to suggest that you need to practice for 10,000 hours in order to become a proficient drummer. Rather, it's meant to encourage you that with a strong work ethic, results will come.

I'd like to share a personal story that will help to illustrate the results of hard work and passion. It involves something I wasn't so good at: basketball. When I was in eighth grade, I tried out for the school team. I did so because most of my close friends were going to play. But I was horrible. I made the team only because I was willing to play defense and do the dirty work. While I didn't play much at all that year, I became very passionate about the game. I knew that I needed to get better over the summer. I met a guy named Bill Caviston, who was much older and was a great basketball player. I told Bill of my desire to get better, and he said, "I'll help you, but you're going to work!"

Every day that summer, I was at the basketball court from nearly sunrise to sundown, practicing and running drills. Before leaving each day, I had to make at least twenty free throws in a row. If I got to nineteen and missed, I did sprints and push-ups and started over until I succeeded.

After working harder that summer and fall than I ever had before, I saw results. When basketball season came,

I not only made the team but was voted captain. I worked hard again the next summer, and in tenth grade I was the only sophomore to make the varsity squad. This story is not to pat myself on the back, but to reinforce that you don't need to be blessed with talent to succeed at something. You need a good work ethic.

Conversely, drums and music have always come naturally to me. But my career would've been short-lived, and my growth stifled, had I not continued to work and cultivate my abilities. After thirty years of playing, I'm more passionate than ever about learning and improving. I can attest that hard work and passion equals results, no matter what your current skill level.

To reiterate this idea, we would like to share a video clip called "The Gift" from jazz drummer/educator John Riley's DVD *The Master Drummer*. John eloquently explains how the gifted are not those blessed with natural ability but rather the ones who've found their passion. If you have a smartphone, use it to scan this QR code and view the clip, which will also be available at moderndrummer.com.



I wish you the best in developing a solid and disciplined practice routine.

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. He can be reached through jeremyhummel.com.



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Fours and Sevens in 7/8

Part 1: Single Strokes by Bill Bachman

This month we're going to work on a couple of short-burst single-stroke rudiments: the single four and single seven. The key to executing these rudiments effectively is using finger control to play rapid free strokes. Single fours and sevens are very commonly used in fills on the drumkit, and practicing them on a pad will build speed and strength for playing doubles, triples, and even sets of four notes with each hand. As your finger control improves, these single-stroke bursts will become easy to play at very fast tempos. Speed certainly isn't everything, but the more musical options you have, the better.

Every stroke of the single four and single seven should be played as a free stroke. If the free stroke is rebounding properly, that means that each note is played with enough velocity down toward the drum to allow the stick to bounce back up, and that the wrist and fingers are relaxed so as not to inhibit the stick. It's also important that the fingers stay somewhat open and away from the palm. This allows the stick to vibrate freely and gives the fingers the opportunity to add a little bit more velocity to the strokes.

I recommend beginning at slow tempos, with the stick starting and stopping past vertical in order to ensure that the fingers are opening up to help move the stick instead of simply holding it, which would inhibit

the speed and add unnecessary tension. If at any point the last stroke played by either hand doesn't rebound by itself, then you're practicing at a tempo that's too fast for your finger speed and you're not developing the desired finesse.

The exercise is in 7/8. The first bar can be broken down into groups of two, two, and three. The second bar repeats that pattern starting with the left hand. The third bar is reversed into groups of three, two, and two. The fourth bar is a repeat of bar three, except it has a triplet turnaround that allows you to repeat the exercise using the opposite sticking. Every group of two will contain a single four, and every group of three will contain a single seven. You could shorthand the four-bar exercise like this: 4-4-7, 4-4-7, 7-4-4, 7-4-turnaround.

The exercise is short, but don't be fooled. Developing hand technique is not about learning a lot of vocabulary; rather, it's about spending time getting in thousands of perfect repetitions to train your muscle memory. The muscle memory you'll develop through this short exercise will serve to make a lot of other things you play infinitely easier. Perform the exercise with a metronome, and be sure the strokes don't decrescendo (get softer) and that the last stroke in each hand rebounds all the way up by itself. Work up your finger control, and burn it!

The musical notation consists of two systems of four bars each, in 7/8 time. The first system has four bars with the following stickings: Bar 1: R L R L, L R L R, R L R L R L R; Bar 2: L R L R, L R L R, L R L R L R L; Bar 3: L R L R, L R L R, L R L R L R L; Bar 4: R L R L, R L R L, R L R L R L R. The second system has four bars with the following stickings: Bar 5: L R L R L R L, L R L R, L R L R, L R L R L R L; Bar 6: R L R L, R L R L, R L R L; Bar 7: R L R L R L R, L R L R, L R L R; Bar 8: R L R L, L R L R, L R L R.

Bill Bachman is an international drum clinician and a freelance drumset player in the Dallas area. For more information, including how to sign up for online lessons through Skype, visit billbachman.net.





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Improve Your Bottom Line

Part 2: Bass Drum Comping in 3/4 by Steve Fidyk



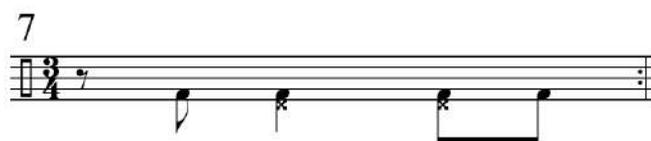
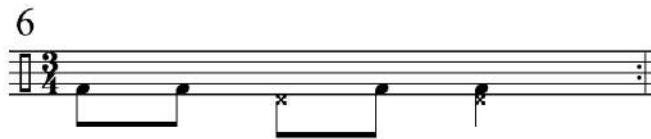
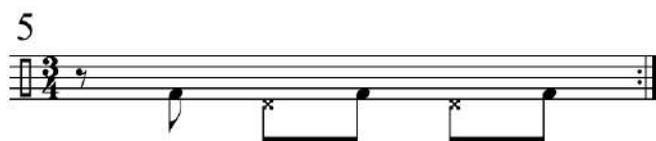
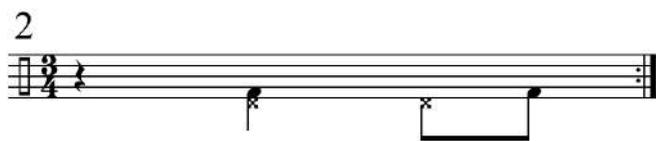
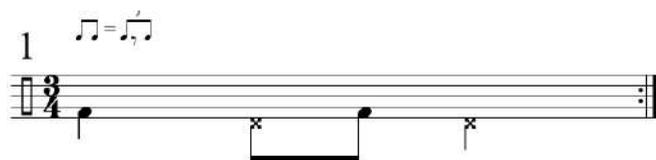
Continuing with the concept introduced in the last issue, this article explores bass drum comping ideas in 3/4. The phrases included here are intended to help you develop dynamic balance with your right foot in conjunction with your three remaining limbs.

The legendary jazz drummers Max Roach and Joe Morello were among the first to explore and improvise within 3/4 time. The rhythmic ideas these masters developed were solid yet loose and fluid. For inspiration, check out *Jazz in 3/4 Time* (Roach) and *Time Out* (Morello with Dave Brubeck).

As you practice the example below, strive to keep each instrument's sound balanced dynamically with the remaining limbs.



Next, try the following bass drum patterns with the ride cymbal and hi-hat rhythm.



Once you can play each three-voice example with control, add the following snare drum patterns.

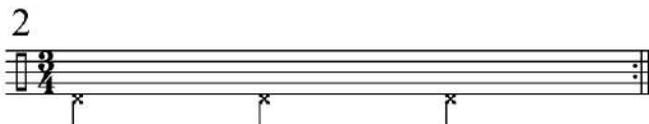


PROTECTION
PERFECTED



As you practice these combinations, listen to each of your limbs to ensure that you have complete rhythmic and dynamic control. Commit to playing each example for an extended period of time, with a metronome and at a wide range of tempos, until the pulse is locked in and feeling strong.

For variation, repeat each of the examples using the following hi-hat ostinatos.



Steve Fidyk co-leads the Taylor/Fidyk Big Band (with arranger Mark Taylor), freelances with vocalist Maureen McGovern, and is a member of the jazz studies faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia. He's also the author of several instructional books. His latest, *Big Band Drumming at First Sight*, is available through Alfred Publishing.



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Popular Play-Alongs

Part 2: Pop-Punk by Donny Gruendler



In our first play-along article (July 2012), we developed the proper performance technique, groove vocabulary, and sound to play a Top 40 Justin Timberlake-style tune, “Timber Grooves.” This month we’re going to work through a pop-punk chart titled “Fall in Beat.” Be sure to log on to the Education page at moderndrummer.com to download the play-along and demo MP3s.

POP-PUNK

Pop-punk is a subgenre of alternative rock that combines the melodies, chord changes, and grooves of pop music with speedy punk tempos and loud, driving guitars. Green Day and Weezer were the first bands to popularize this style, in the early 1990s, and in recent years groups like Fall Out Boy, Panic! at the Disco, and My Chemical Romance became quite successful in the genre.

This tune has an ABABC form. Each letter represents a phrase comprising a particular melody, chord structure, and groove. Let’s take a look at each pattern in detail.

The A section features a straight-8th hi-hat pattern with quarter notes on the bass drum and an open hi-hat accent on the “&” of each beat. Avoid flamming between the bass drum and snare.



The pattern in the B section has a double-time feel, which puts the snare on the “&” of each beat. This groove gives the illusion that the song speeds up. The bass drum employs 16th notes that don’t always line up with the hi-hat.



There’s an additional eight-bar section (labeled C) added to the ABAB form. This part also has a double-time feel, but here you’ll be playing 16th notes on the ride while the hi-hat closes on the offbeats in unison with the snare.

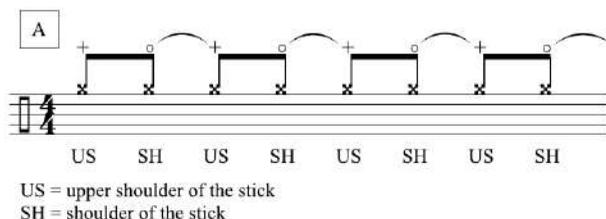


PERFORMANCE NOTES

The tune will utilize articulations similar to “Timber Grooves.” The bass drum should be played forcefully, with a staccato articulation and a dynamic of forte (loud). Try using a plastic beater, and bury it into the head. It also helps to use your entire leg and foot to make each stroke.

The snare drum should be played very consistently and at a dynamic of forte. Each snare hit should be a rimshot.

During the A section, the hi-hat should be played evenly and forcefully at a dynamic of mezzo-forte (medium-loud). Use the upper shoulder of the stick (just below the tip) for the closed notes and the shoulder of the stick for each hi-hat opening. This technique creates a thick hi-hat sound that propels the music forward.



In the B section, the hi-hat plays a partially open, slosy 8th-note pattern that should be articulated evenly and forcefully at a dynamic of fortissimo (very loud). In order to achieve this sound, use the shoulder of the stick to play the top and bottom hi-hat cymbals simultaneously.

TALK-DOWN

The song begins with a four-bar introduction where the drums lay out. In order to foreshadow the double-time feel in the B section, you’ll need to play a fill leading in that signifies the upcoming change. One possible option, which is demonstrated on the demo mix at moderndrummer.com, is to play four single-stroke 32nd notes that begin on the “&” of beat 4.



To create additional musical tension during the first appearance of the B section—as well as during its reappearance in the coda—a one-bar break is added. This creates a nine-bar phrase.

The complete chart is on page 66.

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$\text{♩} = 101$
Intro Sound Fx

4

A

(4) Coda

(8) Fill —

B

(4) Fill —

(8)

(9)

A2

(4)

(8) Fill —

B2

Fill —

C

(4)

(8) Fill —

D.C. al Coda

Coda

Fill —

Donny Gruendler is the director of performance programs at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and the creator of Hudson Music's download series *Seeing Sounds* and *Private Lessons*. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.



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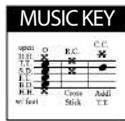
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Exploring the New Frontier

Moving Beyond Pattern-Based Thinking by Marko Djordjevic



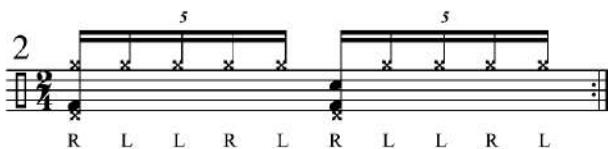
Practice materials laid out in any given method book are often validated by the possibilities for musical application that await those who work through the pages patiently and diligently. This article is designed to give you a glimpse of the method outlined in my book, *The New Frontier*, before moving into some challenging applications that incorporate the abilities acquired by practicing the ideas suggested in the book.

STEP ONE: THE BASIC PRINCIPLE

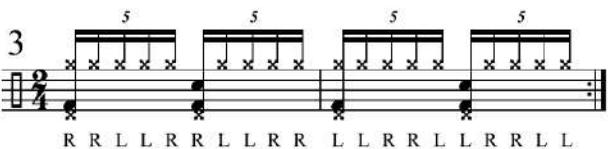
We begin by playing two beats of quintuplets with all the strokes on the hi-hat, except the stroke on beat 2, which lands on the snare. The feet play steady quarter notes.



You can use single strokes to get this going, but once you start feeling comfortable with the subdivision and begin hearing the sound of the quintuplets, you're ready to get into some further explorations. My book provides fifteen alternate stickings to get away from basic single strokes. Here's a more natural variation.



Here's a pattern that's deceptively difficult.



And here's one that's quite challenging.



By practicing the previous examples, you'll get better at hearing and playing quintuplets, and you'll become more agile by dealing with unfamiliar stickings.

STEP TWO: IMPROVISE

However challenging it may have been to get the previous exercises under control, the real work is in what lies ahead. After learning the sticking patterns, you must then spend time improvising within the given framework. This may be difficult to do at first. But through practice, you'll develop the ability to keep altering the sticking in a stream-of-consciousness fashion, utilizing all kinds of combinations—even unorthodox ones that might contain three or more strokes in a row with one hand, or ones that call for a broken double stroke between the hi-hat and snare. Improvising the sticking solidifies the sound of the quintuplet subdivision internally as well as externally, as you can't rely on any particular sticking and you have to use your ears to ensure an even flow and an accurate backbeat placement.

One simple way to force yourself to change stickings repeatedly would be to make your backbeat land on the opposite hand each time. For instance, if you play the first backbeat with your right hand, then the following must come from the left, and so on. The goal is to break free from a patterned approach to playing. This will eventually allow you the freedom to shape your musical statements in exciting ways that differ from the norm.

STEP THREE: MOVE THE BACKBEAT

The snare can be placed anywhere within the subdivision. Beat 2 is the most common place to start, but I encourage you to explore all of the other landing points as well. These less-conventional placements require you to really use your ears, because you'll be landing on the snare at points that are off the beaten path while constantly improvising your stickings, so you definitely can't rely on patterns when practicing this step.

The goal of this type of method is to get you closer to immediately transferring what you hear to the drumset, without being locked into any memorized sticking combinations. The desired outcome, after many hours of careful and focused practice, is the ability to play any sound with, before, or after any other sound in an improvised fashion.

MUSICAL BREAKTHROUGHS

To illustrate the points further, we're going to conclude with some ideas that came to me as a result of practicing the material contained in my book.

In this example, the rhythm of the bass drum is a direct quote of the bass line in Jacques Schwarz-Bart's tune "Soné Ka-La." The left foot fills in around the bass drum, which is a challenge because there are many double strokes involved.

This phrase goes over the barline, using three-, five-, and seven-note groupings of 16th notes.

5

In the tune “My Lucky Number,” from the Sveti album *Where I Come From*, I play a solo over a left-foot ostinato. I use brushes, so you can really hear both the ostinato and the solo ideas played over it. The rhythm is in 7/8.

6

This is a nice-sounding polymetric idea composed of parts in 5/8 (right hand), 2/4 (right foot), 3/8 (left foot), and 7/8 (left hand). The parts get layered one by one, and once they’re all playing, the left hand begins improvising over the remaining three ostinatos. This pattern has become a piece titled “What Time Is It?”

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Here’s another idea involving multiple meters. This one combines 2/4 (right hand), 6/8 (bass drum and left hand), and 5/8 (left foot). Once all of the parts are introduced and established, the left foot solos over the others.

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13

In my tune “We’ll See,” which is also on *Where I Come From*, I play a 3/4 beat with the bass drum playing off a four-three polyrhythm. The snare lands on beat 3, while the hi-hat foot plays a steady stream of 8th notes. As the tune progresses, the interactions between the limbs get more involved, but the basic rhythmic structure stays in place.

After the tune was written and recorded, I began thinking about ways to explore polymetric possibilities in order to give the groove a different flavor. I looked to the left-foot 8th-note flow as a possible place to get this going. By switching some of the notes from the chick sound to splashes, I began playing two-, three-, and four-note combinations, as well as longer phrases of fives and sevens. At first this was very challenging, but with practice I’ve arrived at a point where I can either keep repeating one particular grouping over and over, thus creating the impression of two time signatures moving simultaneously, or I can freely improvise a totally independent line of rhythmic counterpoint to the main beat.

14

Students often complain that what they hear is beyond what they can actually execute on the instrument in the heat of the moment. The method I’ve introduced here is geared precisely toward removing the barriers that exist between your head, ears, limbs, and heart, as well as between you, the instrument, and the music you’re playing. This is a lofty goal, and it requires time, dedication, concentration, persistence, and patience. And above all else, it requires a love of drums and music that’s never ending, much like the challenges that come with striving for the unattainable goal of perfection in artistic expression.

Marko Djordjevic, who was born in Belgrade, Serbia, has performed with Aaron Goldberg, Matt Garrison, Eric Lewis, Jonah Smith, and many others. He is the bandleader of Sveti and is on the faculty at the Collective in New York City. Djordjevic’s DVD, *Where I Come From*, and book, *The New Frontier for Drumset*, are available through Alfred Publishing. For more info, go to svetimarko.com.



Drum Athletes

Part 3: Lower-Body Strength Builders and Coordination Exercises

by Billy Cuthrell

In the last two articles (August and September 2012), we outlined exercises designed to build hand/eye coordination, speed, dexterity, and agility. The foundation of those exercises and drills is based on efficiency of movement, while developing speed and control of your hands and limbs. This third set of exercises will challenge your muscular system and help build leg strength while working compound joints and muscles. These exercises will also help strengthen your core and lower back muscles, which is essential to hold you up on your throne during long gigs.

Once you've mastered the sets of drills from the first two articles, you can combine them with these exercises for a very challenging circuit. The routines can be done in your home, at the gym, or out on your driveway on a nice day.

For this set of exercises you'll need a partner and about forty balls of various sizes (such as tennis, racquet, and squash balls). Follow the directions as outlined, and keep in mind that the exercises are challenging. Start slowly, and work your way up.

SQUAT CATCH

This one is a leg burner! You'll be in a squat position the entire time of the exercise, so your legs will feel the pressure as you turn to catch the balls when they're tossed to you. You may want to do some squats to warm up before starting the routine. As with the other exercises, these get harder and more complex as your training partner moves closer to you. Here's how to do the squat catch:



1. Have your partner kneel facing you, about 10' in front, with the balls gathered in front of him or her on the floor.

2. Get in a squat position, facing your partner, with your legs shoulder width apart. Your knees should be bent at a 35- to 45-degree angle. If you're flexible enough, your upper thighs will be parallel to the floor. Place your weight on your heels. Your back should be straight, and your abs should be tight. Your body weight is to be distributed evenly with a solid stance.

3. Your partner will toss the balls toward you, each time calling out which hand to catch the ball with.

4. To catch the balls, move only from your waist up. Your feet should stay planted in the squat position. Discard each

ball quickly after catching it, so your hands are free to catch the next ball coming toward you.

5. Do fifteen to twenty repetitions.

6. Rest for sixty seconds.

7. Shorten the distance between you and your partner, and repeat the exercise.

LUNGE POSITION CATCH

If your legs aren't already toast after you do several rounds of the squat catch, then the lunge position catch will help finish them off. Here's how it works:

1. Stand about 15' from your training partner in a split-leg lunge position. Your right leg should be in front of you, at a 35- to 45-degree angle, while your left leg is behind you and bent toward the floor. (Make sure your left knee doesn't touch the ground.) Your body weight should be on your front leg and heel. Keep your head up, your chest high, your abs tight, and your back straight.

2. Have your partner kneel about 15' in front of you with the balls gathered in front of him or her on the floor.

3. As you hold your lunge position, your partner will toss the balls toward you, calling out which hand to use to catch each one. The balls should be thrown to your left, right, or middle. The difficulty level will increase as the balls are tossed faster and faster. Start slowly, and gradually speed up the process. Catch each ball while holding your body up and in balance in the lunge position.

4. Rest for sixty seconds, reset your position with the opposite leg in front, and repeat the exercise five times, moving closer between rounds.



CHALLENGING CIRCUITS

Variations of these exercises include standing on one leg while the other is held up in front of you in a high step position. Or you can stand in a sumo squat position where the legs are held wide and the toes are pointed out.

For a full-body workout, you can try combining these squat and lunge exercises with the push-up position catches I discussed in the last article. The object is to keep your muscles and body guessing and to keep the speed and pace inconsistent so you're always working mentally and physically to stay in top shape. Remember to stop the exercise if the workouts are too strenuous or too advanced for you. Always feel free to add your own twist and come up with variations. Good luck, and have fun!

Billy Cuthrell owns and operates the Progressive Music Center and is a fitness trainer for musicians in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area. You can contact him directly at bcjm@nc.rr.com.



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SABIAN B8 Pro O-Zone Crashes

B8 Pro O-Zone crashes feature a double ring of 2" holes that's said to offer "a rapid response, brilliant explosion, and dirty agitation." The cymbals, which are thin in weight, are available in 16" and 18" models. The 16" lists for \$99, and the 18" is \$109. sabian.com

AHEAD Armor Cases

Ahead Armor Cases recently added new 48" and 28" models to complement its original 38" rolling hardware case. The 48" and 38" versions carry a two-year warranty and feature an OGIO-engineered, aircraft-standard roller-board design that can accommodate up to 300 pounds of drum hardware and accessories. The 28" model includes heavy-duty wheels and can carry up to 200 pounds. All three models offer premium-grade handles and straps and high-density polyester fabric exteriors. List prices range from \$259 to \$399.50. bigbangdist.com



RHYTHM HOUSE DRUMS RHD Pro Series Djembe

Using locally harvested hardwoods and a modern staved, segmented design, the RHD Pro series djembe is eco-friendly and handcrafted in the United States. Because of the wood grain orientation and the use of smaller individual pieces, the shell is said to be very stable and to hold up well over time. High-strength/low-stretch rope keeps the drum in tune longer. Vegan- and vegetarian-friendly options are available. List price: \$600. rhythmhousedrums.com

TRX Cymbal Mallets

TRX's new cymbal mallets are custom crafted to provide superior sound and performance in a wide variety of drumming situations. The two-color soft-yarn heads are individually hand-wound by drummer/educator and mallet specialist Adam Argullin and attached to premium-grade Southern hickory drumstick handles that feature distinctive color graphics. List price: \$50. trxcymbals.com



PAISTE Giant Beat Thins

With the success of the reissued Giant Beat line in 2005, Paiste decided to add 18" and 20" Thin models. These lighter-weight cymbals feature a soft, smooth attack followed by a deep, warm, velvety, and round sound designed to pair well with the originals. When played with the tip of the stick, the cymbals are said to produce subtle, silvery highs followed by a dark wash. paiste.com





DW 40th Anniversary Limited Exotic Drumkit

To commemorate its fortieth birthday, DW created the Tamo Ash Exotic Collector's series drumset. The limited edition six-piece set (8x10, 9x12, 12x14, and 14x16 toms, 5 1/2x14 snare, and 18x22 bass drum) features North American hard-rock maple shells. The Tamo Ash veneer was handpicked by DW executive vice president and drum designer John Good.

In addition to the unique finish, the 40th Anniversary Collector's series set also includes standard DW custom shop features such as graduated True Hoop counterhoops, suspension tom mounts with newly reengineered TB12 tom brackets, True Pitch tension rods, a MAG snare throw-off system, DW heads by Remo USA, and a Monorail shock-mounted internal microphone system with a custom silver Audix D6 bass drum microphone. List price: \$11,814.

dwdrums.com



LP Matador Deep-Shell Timbales

Matador timbales are now available with extra-deep shells for increased volume and richer bass tones. The newly designed steel shells are 8" deep and feature a unique "classic antique" powder-coated finish. The 14" and 15" timbales are sold as a set and include a heavy-duty chrome stand, a Matador cowbell, a tuning wrench, and sticks. List price: \$559.

lpmusic.com

CRESCENDO DS-11 High Fidelity Earphones



Crescendo DS-11 high-fidelity earphones are designed for use as in-ear monitors. They come with universal tips and provide 22dB of noise reduction. The DS-11 can be upgraded to custom molds and is interchangeable with other products from Crescendo. The DS-11 kit includes high-isolation earphones with a 1.4-meter cable fitted with a 3.5 mm stereo plug, two pairs of DEC three-flange silicone earplugs, three pairs of DEC mushroom earplugs, and an EVA travel case.

crescendo-hearingprotection.com



UNION DRUMS Sean Carey UnionX Signature Series Snare Drums

Union Drums' UnionX Recording series includes two signature snares for Bon Iver drummer Sean Carey. The drums feature an 8-ply, 10 mm shell with inner and outer plies of walnut, six inner plies of maple, and 45-degree bearing edges. Chrome vintage-style tube lugs and a high-gloss natural finish give these drums, which are available in 5 1/2x14 and 7x14 sizes, a classic look. Die-cast hoops offer solid, accurate tuning. The drums feature Nickelworks snare strainers and PureSound snare wires.

uniondrums.com



LEGACY PERCUSSION GEAR Remote Speedy Hat 2.0

The Remote Speedy Hat version 2.0 features bigger pulleys, a lubricated bronze-bearing pedal hinge, and a machined cable/pedal connection. The pedal, engraved with the LPG logo, is made from CNC-machined aluminum. The longer brace now extends to 23" for greater hi-hat displacement.

remotespeedyhat.com

GRETSCH Renown57 Bop Kits

Gretsch, which originated what is now the standard bop drumkit configuration of a 14x18 bass drum, 8x12 tom, and 14x14 floor tom, has introduced this setup in the popular classic-car-inspired Renown57 series. Renown57 Bop kits are available in Motor City blue, Motor City black, and the new Motor City red. List price: \$2,460. gretschdrums.com



ROBOCUP Portable Caddy

The RoboCup is a portable caddy that can hold two drinks, a microphone, drumsticks, keys, and other personal essentials. The caddy mounts to round or flat surfaces via rubberized jaws that operate with two zinc-coated springs. The RoboCup can be configured to hold narrow-base drinks, and it includes two hook-and-loop straps to secure drumsticks. The bottom caps unscrew, and a 360-degree attachment accessory is also available. List price: \$19.99. therobocup.com



ANDY GRAHAM PRODUCTIONS Slaperoo

The Slaperoo is an all-metal percussion instrument that can be played vertically or mounted horizontally within a drumkit. Sound is created on the Slaperoo by striking a 4' steel strap that's amplified by a special internal pickup. The tunable strap can be played with the hands or with a hand/stick combination. The Slaperoo has harmonic nodes along the surface of the strap that can bring out tonal subtleties, while the use of effects pedals offers endless applications. List price: \$599. slaperoo.com



TOCA Origins Series Djembes

Origins series djembes are carved from a single piece of environmentally friendly, plantation-grown mahogany and are lathe turned to maintain a uniform thickness. The bowl features lathed grooves and a rough surface pattern to help eliminate overtones. The drums, which are available in four sizes (12x7, 16x8, 20x10, and 24x12), have hand-cut bearing edges and natural goatskin heads and feature an African mask motif or a Celtic knot carving pattern. tocapercussion.com



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Toca's Freestyle II Djembes are lightweight, durable and weather resistant, making them the ideal drum for the player on the go. The synthetic head delivers crisp slaps and deep rich bass tones and never loses its pitch.

Freestyle II Djembes are available in both rope-tuned and mechanically-tuned models. They also come in a variety of sizes and attractive finishes, ensuring that there's a Toca Djembe that will perfectly fit your own unique "percussionality."



Mina Rodriguez / Percussionist and Educator

COLLECTOR'S CORNER



L and S Dictator Snare Drum

by Harry Cangany

In 1929, thirty years after starting the Leedy Manufacturing Company, Ulysses Grant Leedy sold the business to C.G. Conn. Leedy, who was called U.G. by his friends and Lys by family, decided to sell the business after developing heart disease.

U.G.'s elder son, Eugene, had no interest in the company. In fact, he had been fired on his first day on the job after getting caught taking a nap. The younger son, Edwin Hollis (E.H.), a college student, was too young to run such an enterprise. By 1930, the Leedy equipment and inventory was moved from Indianapolis to Conn's facilities in Elkhart, Indiana.

Since some of his former employees resisted the move, U.G. Leedy decided to start another manufacturing concern in Indianapolis, for drums and non-musical products. This company was L and S. The name originally stood for "Leedy and Sons." But by the time production started in 1931, U.G. had already died. In stepped E.H. Leedy as secretary treasurer, and former Leedy engineer Cecil Strupe became

president. When these two men took over, L and S became unofficially known as Leedy and Strupe. The formal name of the company was the General Products Corporation, Manufacturers of L and S Drummers Equipment.

By September of 1931, production at L and S was up and running, and deliveries began on the first of October. Strupe and Leedy, however, never got along. It's been reported that the relationship was so strained that Strupe didn't want E.H. in the factory, and Strupe wasn't welcome in the sales office. That tense relationship proved to be a bit of an omen, as L and S never made the widespread global impact on drum manufacturing that Strupe had hoped for. For instance, the company built a drum called the Master Tension, which was one of three attempts by Strupe to design a model that was tensioned without a key. In the 1936 catalog, L and S claimed, "The Master Tension tympani-style principle of tuning represents the greatest advance in drum construction in history.... Through a tensioning

mechanism operation on the principle of machine tympani, these handles regulate the heads tight or loose, easily and rapidly, with perfectly distributed tension."

Our featured snare is a 3-ply Dictator—in retrospect an unfortunate choice of name. The beautiful finish is a dark blue marine pearl with a silver center band. The lugs are heavy and have non-swiveling lug nuts. All of the metalwork has pitted over time, which indicates that the dies weren't quite the engineering works of art that were used by the original Leedy company.

L and S never had a sales force. Its products were sold nationally, via mail order, by the Chicago Musical Instrument Company. L and S also sold locally to the public.

By 1939, L and S had sold its products to Indiana Music and shut down all manufacturing. Strupe had moved on to WFL two years prior, and E.H. Leedy entered the U.S. Navy. Leedy's mother, the company's source for money, went on quietly with her life.



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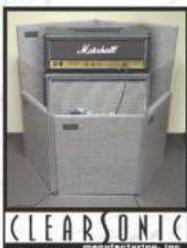
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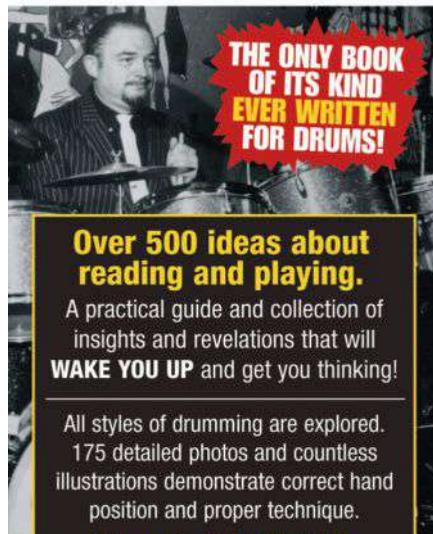


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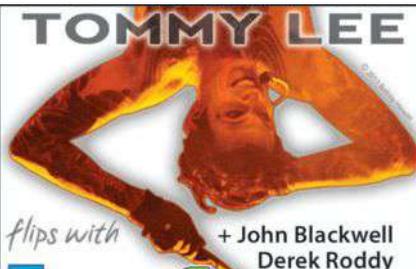
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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?



MICK TUCKER

by Alex Hicks

It's entirely appropriate that **Sweet's** drummer played the theme to the film *The Man With the Golden Arm* in his solo spot. Glitter rock's most exciting sticksman was as magical as he was reliable.

For nearly a quarter century, Mick Tucker's powerful swing and blazing chops fueled the British glam band Sweet. Tucker cofounded the group in 1968 and steered it through a series of irreverent,

hugely popular hits on both sides of the Atlantic, including "Fox on the Run," "The Ballroom Blitz," "Little Willy," and "Love Is Like Oxygen."

Although Sweet is best remembered for its tight pop craft and glittery image, the musical virtuosity exhibited by the group members live and on record is heralded by serious rock fans and fellow musicians alike. Tucker's style betrays the influence of traditional big band, R&B, and early rock 'n' roll, while giving a glimpse of where

hard rock, punk, and heavy metal would head in the future. When Tucker passed away on February 14, 2002, at the age of fifty-four, after a battle with leukemia, many felt that British rock had lost one of its very best drummers.

AN UNHERALDED GIANT

Sweet's most successful period was between 1971 and 1978, but largely thanks to YouTube, new fans, many in their teens, have recently been enjoying the band's extensive catalog for the first time. The comment sections for numerous Sweet clips are filled with glowing praise for Mick Tucker's brilliance. "Mick was the most underrated drummer to come out of England," Sweet bassist Steve Priest said in 2002. "He was the powerhouse of the band. Technically he was marvelous. His timing



The classic Sweet lineup, from left: Steve Priest, Mick Tucker, Andy Scott, and Brian Connolly

was impeccable. But he had a lot of soul as well, and he really felt what he was playing." Sweet guitarist Andy Scott put it simply, also in 2002: "Mick was the best drummer around in the '70s. And he was the most proficient of the four of us."

That's saying something, considering the amount of talent in the band. In fact, it's often said that Sweet was a group of four frontmen. Everyone could sing lead and harmony, yet each attracted attention to himself in a way that helped rather than hurt the overall presentation. Brian Connolly could sing as tenderly as Yes's Jon Anderson or as primally as Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. Andy Scott's heavy riffs, regal harmonized leads, and aggressive whammy-bar technique gave ideas to countless metal gods to follow. Steve Priest's propellant, pointed bass and campy humor made him the linchpin of Sweet's sound and personal-

ity. And then there was Tucker, the man with the golden arms, able to pepper a perfect groove with imaginative flurries at just the right spots.

Cheap Trick drummer Bun E. Carlos fondly remembers when Sweet opened for his band in 1979. "On most nights we went side stage and watched them," Carlos says. "They were rockin' live, and Mick was fun to watch. His style reminded me of an early Keith Moon. Mick was one of the few double bass drummers that didn't let the second bass drum get in the way of a swinging tune like 'Ballroom Blitz.' He had a *great* feel on double bass, played them effortlessly.

"And those guys knew how to have fun," Carlos adds. "We'd call them back on stage during our encores and jam on 'Let It Rock.' Mick would play my kit with the 26" bass drum and just rock out with us. I'd hop up on the riser with him, playing guitar and

watching him play. We had some great times together."

Two other drummers who are vocal Tucker fans are Jack Irons (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam, Wallflowers) and Snowy Shaw (Therion, King Diamond/Mercyful Fate, Dimmu Borgir). "Mick was a *great* drummer," Irons says. "He had that fluid, '60s/'70s rock 'n' roll freedom. His drumming was super-tight and musical, technical, and rocking."

Shaw, an in-demand multi-instrumentalist from Sweden, calls Tucker an unsung hero. "Mick's tastefulness, precision, and strong signature put him at the very top of the list of drumming heroes I had when I was trying to master the profession," he says. "Technically, he was right up there with Ian Paice and John Bonham. Like a kid in a candy store, I devoured his selection of trademark tricks and licks, which he

MICK'S LICKS AND TRICKS

MUSIC KEY

snare: O
 H.H.: H
 S.D.: S
 R.D.: R
 T.C.: T
 w/ feet: F

C.C.: C
 R.C.: R

Perhaps the most defining element of Tucker's style is his snare work. Most Sweet songs feature swift snare fills—singles, doubles, and buzz rolls jazzed up by unpredictable accents or shifting metric division.

The drum intro to "Burning"/"Someone Else Will," recorded live in 1973 and included on 1975's *Strung Up* compilation, serves as a good example.

Another common Tucker device was driving his beats with both hands on the snare. Sweet's 1973 single "The Ballroom Blitz" best represents this approach. Aside from the two off-beat bass drum notes, the rhythm of this homage to Sandy Nelson's famous 1961 drumming showcase "Let There Be Drums" may at first seem simple. But it's made challenging by the subtle swinging push of the "&" notes, which Tucker achieved with his right hand while leading with his left hand on the quarter notes. This approach has roots in New Orleans second-line drumming, significantly in the work of Earl Palmer, who used it on Fats Domino's 1957 hit "I'm Walkin'."

The chorus of "Solid Gold Brass," from 1974's *Desolation Boulevard*, showcases two other Tucker trademarks: riding shuffle beats on the floor tom and alternating triplet fills between the snare, bass drum, and toms.

Mick was able to smoothly tie together rapid-fire riffs across the kit, grooving all the while. These four measures from the proto-speed-metal anthem "Burn on the Flame" (1974 B-side) result in near information overload.

Tucker brought hip jazz syncopation to Sweet's music, as in this snaky break from the 1974 single "The Six Teens."

delivered so musically, and with conviction and grace like no one else. It may have been Peter Criss who first got me into drums, but it was Mick Tucker whose drumming most influenced me and who taught me how to play music."

GLAM ROOTS

Mick was born Michael Thomas Tucker on July 17, 1947, in Harlesden, North West London. As a boy, his first interest was art, and he loved to draw. By fourteen a desire to drum took over, fueled by an admiration for Sandy Nelson, Buddy Rich, and Gene Krupa. Mick's father bought the teen a kit on the condition that he take the craft seriously. Hubert Tucker encouraged his son further by getting him his first gig, subbing for Brian Bennett of the legendary British beat group the Shadows at a local workingman's club. He did well, though Tucker's wife, Janet, relates, "If he had known who he was replacing, he would have been so scared!"

A self-taught drummer, Tucker quickly excelled, and by age eighteen he was playing Motown and blues in the band Wainwright's Gentlemen. When Mick was fired in January 1968 for being too flam-

boyant, singer Brian Connolly announced he was leaving as well. The two went looking for bandmates, and Sweet was soon formed. After twenty-three years of near equal doses of success and setbacks, Tucker left the band in 1991 and married Janet on June 29 of that year.

Off stage, Mick was reserved and soft-spoken. He became a musician because of his passion for drums, rather than a desire for celebrity status. Although he's remembered by friends and fans as kind and generous, he did not suffer fools gladly. According to Steve Priest's 1994 autobiography, *Are You Ready, Steve?*, when Tucker offered his opinion during the recording of "The Six Teens," songwriter/producer Mike Chapman yelled, "We don't f**king need you anyway, Mick!" Tucker's argument-ending reply was, "If you don't need us, why don't you just put that tape player on 'record' and erase the whole track?" He was serious when it came to making music, and he stood up for his band's integrity when necessary.

SOLO SENSATION

Tucker was also a skilled soloist, able to improvise tirelessly and exhibiting a

seemingly never-ending flow of ideas. Not content to impress solely with flash, Mick began and ended his spotlight feature with a rock rendition of Elmer Bernstein's theme from the 1955 film *The Man With the Golden Arm*.

Tucker also made innovative use of two projection screens that flanked his riser. One screen played a film of him at the drumkit, while the other showed him playing timpani. Mick traded solos with these projections, then came out front to play timbales along with a fast Santana-style recording. Before bringing the band back in, he played the Bernstein melody on tubular bells and timpani. It was a riveting solo, and Tucker made sure it appealed to the entire audience. Like his bandmates in Sweet, the drummer understood that a truly great performance contains blazing technique and exciting presentation in equal doses.

The author would like to thank Janet Tucker, Steve Priest, Maureen O'Connor, Frank Torpey, Bun E. Carlos, Jack Irons, Snowy Shaw, and Carina Holmgren for their invaluable assistance.



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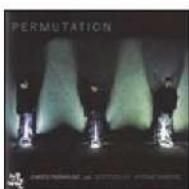
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CRITIQUE

SIX OF THREE: A TRIO CD SURVEY

With the freedom of a stripped-down lineup comes greater responsibility on the drummer—but also more opportunities to shine. A half dozen recent trio releases offer much to contemplate. **Ilya Stemkovsky** slaps on the headphones.



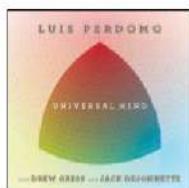
ENRICO PIERANUNZI *PERMUTATION* Musical communication at its highest level. Listen and learn.

Permutation contains so many moments of sheer telepathy between leader Enrico Pieranunzi, bassist Scott Colley, and 2012 *MD Pro* Panelist **Antonio Sanchez**, you wonder how much was worked out ahead of time. On the waltz-time “Critical Path,” Sanchez engages in an exquisite game of call and response with his bandmates, before slicing up the time during a breathtaking solo featuring some blindingly fast hi-hat/snare combinations. Sanchez has been on the world-class list for quite some time, and his tenure in Pat Metheny’s group has only strengthened his creativity in a trio setting. Check out “The Point at Issue” for his ease with tempo changes and his light comping underneath Colley’s solo. (Cam Jazz)



BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO *ODE* The modern piano giant’s stated aim this time out? Challenge his rhythm section, mentally and physically.

For *Ode*, his first trio studio recording since 2005’s *Days Is Done*, pianist Brad Mehldau wrote tunes specifically for his rhythm section to interpret and dissect. On “Stan the Man,” drummer **Jeff Ballard**’s playful solo exhibits a singsong approach to tom phrasing without resorting to flashy chops to get your attention. And during the straight-8th pulse of the title track, Ballard and bassist Larry Grenadier dance around the time, the drummer all snare chatter and cymbal texture, coaxing the sound from his instrument through sheer will. A decade of performances and a couple albums in, *Ode* is the sound of (new-ish guy) Ballard fitting in and leading the way. (Nonesuch)



LUIS PERDOMO *UNIVERSAL MIND* What more could a massively well-documented vet have to say in a trio setting? Turns out, lots.

The Venezuelan-born pianist Luis Perdomo is in good company on his trio outing *Universal Mind*, with the ageless **Jack DeJohnette** sounding as hip as he did forty years ago, stretching the time with his inimitable feel. The opening drum breaks on “Rebellious Contemplation” are pure Jack: kick doubles, thunderous tom rolls, snare ghosting, and crash cymbal flurries designed for forward motion. The drummer’s playing on his own composition “Tin Can Alley” is also a lesson in how to play lots of notes but still swing your tail off. Recommended for anyone wishing to hear DeJohnette in a non-Jarrett trio setting. (RKM Music)



STEVE KUHN TRIO *WISTERIA*

The mood might be subdued, but there are some seriously lively and demanding ideas on display here.

Drummer **Joey Baron** slips into such an effortless swing on “Chalet” that you could almost stop paying attention—that is, until his flams and press rolls usher in breaks displaying unique melodicism, touch, and humor. Not to imply that anyone’s on autopilot here; dig Baron’s aggressive ride and eyebrow-raising fills on the bop-ish, up-tempo “A Likely Story.” Add ECM’s famous recorded drum sound and Joey’s sensitive rapport with the legendary bassist Steve Swallow on lush ballads like “Romance” and the breezy “Dark Glasses,” and you’ve got a trio date that’s great background music as well as a study in small-group dynamics. (ECM)



E.S.T. *301*

Like many posthumous releases, this recording is at once a summation and a look at what could have been.

Culled from the sessions that would ultimately produce the Esbjörn Svensson Trio’s final output, due to the leader’s untimely death in 2008, *301* (like its sister record, *Leucocyte*) is a snapshot of a self-actualized jazz group achieving a peak statement while redefining itself yet again with an ever-increasing emphasis on electronics and distortion. **Magnus Öström**’s assured playing is the tie that binds, whether the drummer is keeping dirge-like time on the slow-burning “Inner City, City Lights” or laying down the heavy-handed rolling pattern on “Three Falling Free Part II.” (Act Music)



VIJAY IYER TRIO *ACCELERANDO*

This isn’t your dad’s idea of a jazz trio. But then, it’s not trying to be. Forward, march!

Drummer **Marcus Gilmore** is increasingly in demand for sessions as of late, so it’s refreshing to hear him in a group that has a bit of history under its belt. Gilmore’s herky-jerky groove on “The Star of a Story” is not dance-floor friendly but somehow manages to provide a bed, albeit one of nails. You won’t be bobbing your head to the pattern on Michael Jackson’s “Human Nature” either—this is forward-thinking jazz, and an old-school swinger like Ed Thigpen is certainly not the reference point. Armed with an ultra-dry, tuned-down snare sound, Gilmore graces the music with a brave modernity, implying the age-old creative question “Why not?” (Act Music)



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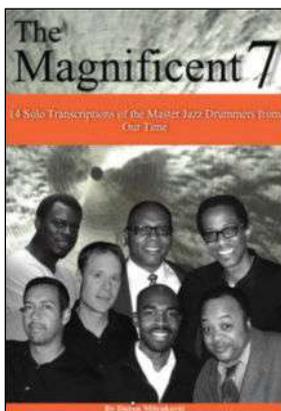
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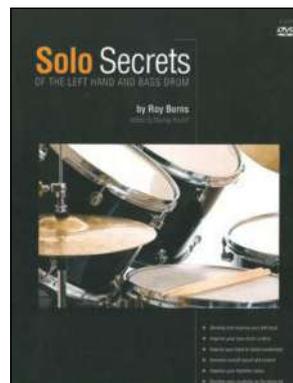
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●●●●○ **THE MAGNIFICENT 7** BY DUSAN MILENKOVIC
BOOK LEVEL: ADVANCED \$26.67

A faculty member at the Vienna International School, the Serbian drummer/educator Dusan Milenkovic offers fourteen carefully transcribed solos by seven leading jazz drummers. Although it's a slim volume, it does boast the advantage of featuring *today's* drumming giants. Too many transcription books rely heavily on the classic masters, but here we get entries by Brian Blade, Eric Harland, Gregory Hutchinson, Antonio Sanchez, Bill Stewart, and others, along with brief commentaries. Challenging. (dusanmilenkovic.com) **Jeff Potter**



●●●●○ **SOLO SECRETS OF THE LEFT HAND AND BASS DRUM** BY ROY BURNS
BOOK/DVD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$17.95

You know that physical sensation you get when you're working on an exercise that stretches your technique? You can almost detect the synapses in your brain as they make new connections, and you become acutely aware of the muscles in your hands and arms working in a way that they've not quite had to before. It feels hard, but it feels good. That's the feeling *Solo Secrets* will give you fairly soon out of the gate.

Author Roy Burns made his legend not only as a performer with jazz luminaries like Benny Goodman and Woody Herman but also as an educator. His clinic appearances were the first and most memorable that many nascent drum stars ever experienced, and his many method books and twelve-year-long Concepts series in this magazine offered invaluable wisdom and guidance to an entire generation of players. Roy's latest book focuses on ideas he developed from watching his own influences Sonny Igoe and Buddy Rich pull off exciting and unusual combinations between the left hand (snare, toms) and bass drum foot.

By practicing the exercises and solos here, a drummer really has no choice but to develop his or her rhythmic vocabulary. Then, when applied in the moment, these new chops add tricks to one's proverbial bag and also enhance the ability to make unique and *musical* statements.

Within the book's thirty-five pages, a drummer will find much to absorb and perfect. I could feel my brain working hard from the get-go, especially on some of those extra-long multiple-left-hand phrases. (I love ya, Roy, but *boy* was I cursing you out trying to bring some of these up to speed.) As the included DVD of Burns' last clinic proves, mastering this type of material can lead to devastating abilities at the kit. You might find yourself cussing under your breath for a good part of that journey, but you'll be grumbling with a smile on your face, knowing that you're doing your drumming some real good. (Kendor Music) **Adam Budofsky**

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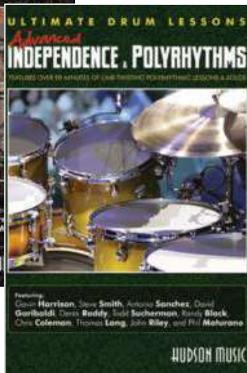
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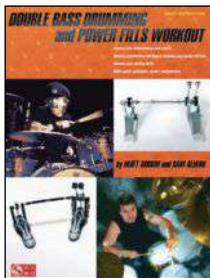
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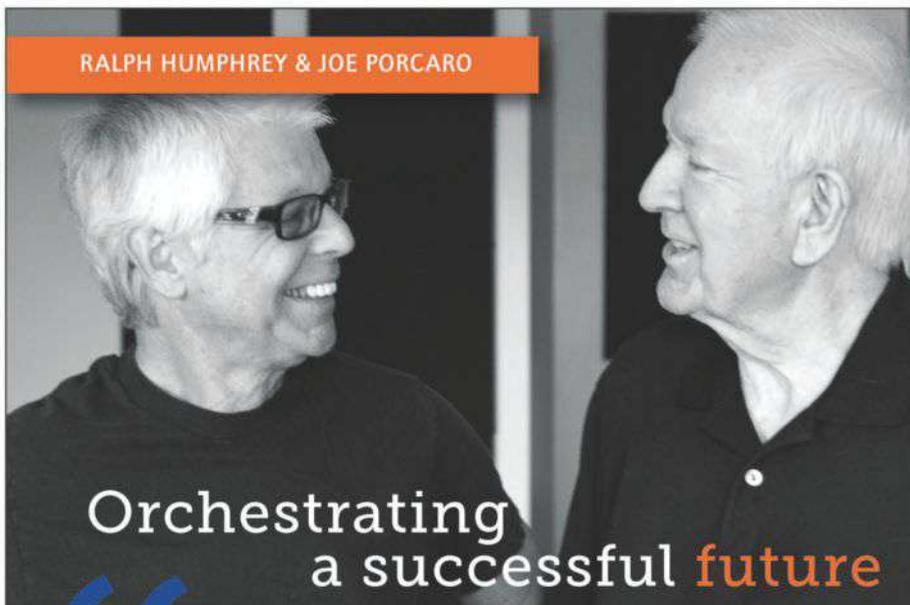
The *Ultimate Drum Lessons* series cherry-picks highlights from across the extensive Hudson DVD catalog, bringing students a "best of" playlist from a generous grouping of today's masters. The two newest collections continue to enlighten. With each clip introduced with fan-like enthusiasm by Chaka Khan's **Chris Coleman**, *Fills and Chops* features Styx's **Todd Sucherman** explaining a furious paradiddle-diddle drum solo intro, Steely Dan's **Keith Carlock** throwing down a signature fill, **Steve Gadd** demonstrating licks from "Aja," Usher's **Aaron Spears** showing various hand/foot combinations, **Thomas Lang** playing crashes from underneath and on top, and others, including **Benny Greb**, **Antonio Sanchez**, **Pat Petrillo**, and **Mike Portnoy**.

Advanced Independence & Polyrhythms contains clips introduced with genuine appreciation by ex-Dillinger Escape Plan/Coheed and Cambria drummer **Chris Pennie**, and features Porcupine Tree's **Gavin Harrison** and drum great **Steve Smith** discussing their unique takes on metric modulation, metal master **Derek Roddy** moving among multiple pedals, Tower of Power's **David Garibaldi** applying his "five-a-diddles" to funk, and other segments with **Randy Black**, **John Riley**, and certain returning drummers from *Fills and Chops*. For those on a budget who are unable to obtain each of the full releases the clips are taken from, these compilations prove essential. (Hudson Music) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



●●●●●
**DOUBLE BASS DRUMMING AND POWER
FILLS WORKOUT BY MATT SORUM & SAM ALIANO**
BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$14.99

This 125-page book taps the melodic and powerful arena-rock drumming skills of Matt Sorum (Guns n' Roses, the Cult, Velvet Revolver) and the double bass mastery of Australian-born Sam Aliano (Slash, Gongzilla). The goal here is to help players develop strong double bass rock grooves and power hand/foot fills for use in real-world situations. Progressively more challenging hand/foot patterns utilize basic note groupings of quarters, 8ths, 16ths, 32nds, and triplets. Players at every level will find value here. The examples are fairly straightforward, so even relative beginners will benefit—though working with a teacher would help, especially considering the absence of a CD or online link for audio examples. But the price is right, and the book could be a very useful tool to build solid double bass chops and expand your vocabulary of hand/foot combination licks. (Cherry Lane) **Mike Haid**



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DRUM CHANNEL

Before starting one of the world's most successful drum and hardware companies, Don Lombardi made a living largely as a drum teacher. These days he's again focused on education, breaking convention with a bold concept for the digital age.

Story and photos by Mike Haid



Drum education has been good to Don Lombardi. For twenty years, starting when he was sixteen, Lombardi taught fifty to sixty students a week. In 1972, at the age of twenty-six, he opened a studio to reach students who were spread across three separate music stores. His work schedule became so full that between playing and teaching, he was able to earn enough money to buy a house and raise four kids.

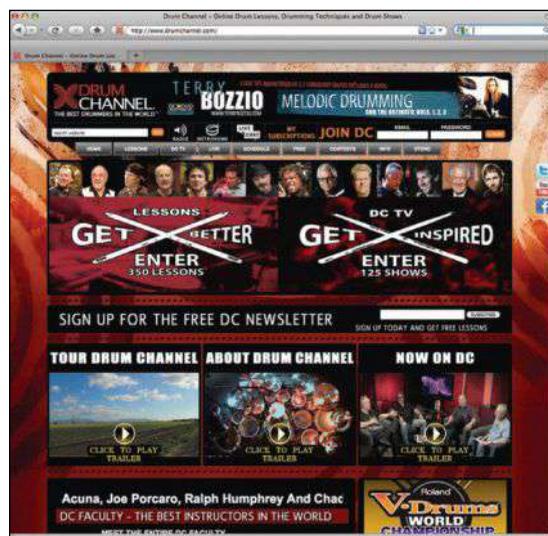
Soon the teaching studio, dubbed Drum Workshop, expanded into a manufacturing operation with the introduction of an adjustable trap-case seat. When Tom Beckman, the father of one of Lombardi's students and the owner of the Camco Drum Company, offered to sell his drum-and hardware-making machinery (but not the Camco name itself), Lombardi found himself the owner of a drum company. As DW's reputation and sales grew, Don had to devote all his attention to the firm, and he left teaching behind. For a while.

After forty years at the helm of Drum Workshop (and its sister company, Pacific

Drums & Percussion), Lombardi focused his energies once again on drum education, albeit now on an international level, with the Drum Channel website. Today he spends about 90 percent of his time on the recently revamped site, while maintaining a relatively small role in Drum Workshop affairs. Don feels that the unique nature of DC will grow the drumming industry by working in conjunction with instructors to complement private lessons with the DC content, enhancing the overall learning experience. In addition to what the Drum Channel currently offers online, Lombardi intends to include live seminars and workshops at the DC facility, where drummers can come out and study specific styles of music with the DC artists, in person.

One thing Lombardi wants to make clear is that Drum

Workshop (whose main headquarters is across the alley from the Drum Channel facility in Oxnard, California) is not affiliated with the website with regard to the selection of featured artists. "Back in the day," Don says, "Ludwig developed an educational division for their drum company. But I wanted to keep DW and DC as two com-

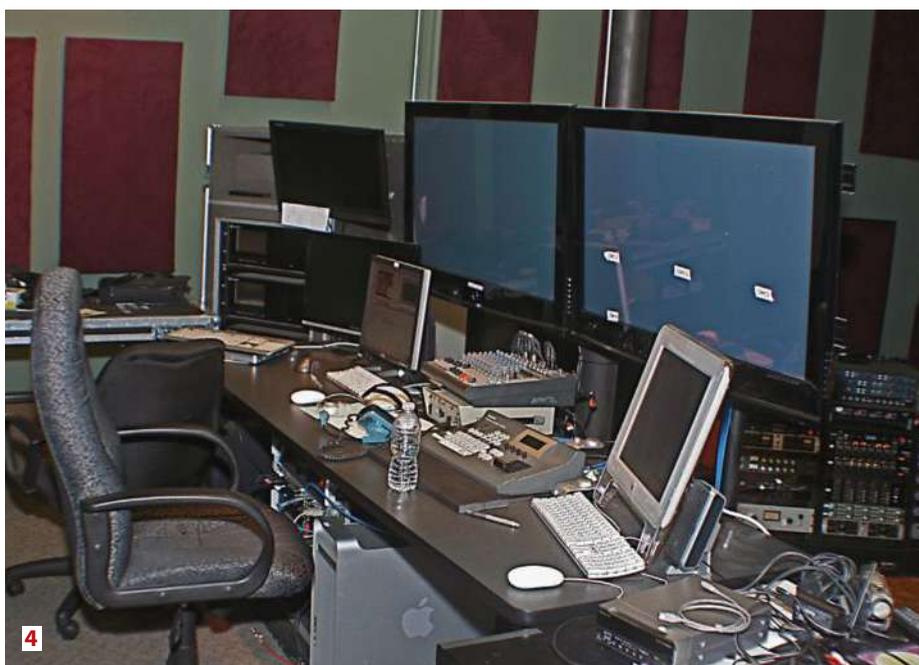




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The main Drum Channel studio (photos 1 and 2) features eight hi-def cameras with a large open area for full-band recording, multiple-drummer setups, and the filming of interviews and guest artist shows. Studio drumming experts, including Jim Keltner, were called in to help design the proper acoustic sound for the space. A separate control room (3) houses high-end recording gear, and a video editing room (4) includes live streaming video broadcast capabilities.

pletely separate entities. Whatever drum company an artist endorses has nothing to do with what we do at Drum Channel. The fact that Terry Bozzio is such a big part of both Drum Channel and Drum Workshop has actually been a plus for Drum Channel, because all of the drummers that come here to take part in the site want to hang out and spend time with him. In doing that, they see firsthand that the Drum Channel is a separate entity, and that it's completely focused on drum education. The only reason so many DW artists were on DC in the beginning was the obvious fact that they were easily accessible and it was cost effective to have them on board.

"What we're hoping to do is fortify the endorsers of Drum Channel to do clinic tours together, which would be fun for them, since most of them usually do clinic tours with drummers that endorse the same products. At this point we have more drummers wanting to schedule time on DC than we have time for, which is a good problem to have.

"As drummers," Lombardi continues, "we know more than anyone else that we are a community. And what better way to connect some of the world's greatest drummers than to have them congregate here at Drum Channel to build a stronger community from within? Neil Peart is excited to come here and run into Alex Acuña and end up taking a two-hour lesson from him."

Drum Channel originally launched in 2008, but Web design issues brought major, unforeseen setbacks. "The Web developers could not deliver the product I was looking for," Lombardi explains. "I had a very specific idea of what I wanted the site to be, and when your wildest dreams come to life on paper, you realize that it takes a lot more work than expected. What was supposed to take eight to twelve months took almost two years, and the product, as a website, didn't really work well. But we launched anyway and limped along for six or seven months, realizing that if the foundation is not solid, the rest of the site suffers. Once I realized we had to take it down and start over, I could now focus on developing what I had envisioned in the first place. One of the features I'm excited about is the Teacher Directory, because we can work with instructors around the world. And something I've learned from my grandkids is the short attention span these days. This taught me to simplify the site to help attract beginner drummers."

Lombardi says that he's still trying to find the best way to get Drum Channel to the consumer. "Fortunately, since we implemented the subscription model, the business has been growing steadily," he reports. "We're still finding our niche, but it



Don Lombardi has a habit of micro-managing his businesses, which seems to have worked well with DW and should be a bonus for Drum Channel. He arrives at the office at 8 A.M. and meets with the DC crew at 9 A.M. for daily assignments. Lombardi works with the artists directly to discuss content and structure, and he pre-edits most of the shows himself. As the head of research and development at Drum Workshop, he still has about six meetings a week there but spends the majority of his time developing Drum Channel.

looks like we're heading in the right direction. The content that we provide to our subscribers involves the best drummers in the world. The young drummers that are growing up with YouTube will most likely begin lessons on Drum Channel with someone like Cobus. He's a self-taught drummer who never took a lesson, but he can sit in with a band, and he has good time and a good feel. The lessons developed with Joe Porcaro and Ralph Humphrey in the Drum Channel Academy are designed to educate drummers from beginning to intermediate to a more advanced level. Then you can study with Gregg Bissonette, Neil Peart, or Peter Erskine for even more advanced lessons.

We also offer an amazing master class with Terry Bozzio on the Art of Drumming. Our focus is to offer online lessons for all levels of drummers as well as genre-specific lessons from world-class instructors."

A new feature on the DC site is Secrets From the Pros, a collection of four- to six-minute tips from world-class players. "We have more than a hundred clips posted so far," Lombardi says. "Chad Smith's master class is basic rock drumming, Chad's way. These are rock beats that anyone can play, but offered either in short lesson form or longer twenty-minute clips with more detailed instruction. What I've discovered works well for today's audience is to edit the footage we already have and create shorter clips of material that fit more into the modern YouTube-style format. We have a Feedback feature as well, so you can ask the teachers questions and actually get a rapport going with them. We'll also offer live lessons, twice a week, to encourage students to learn at a steady and productive rate."

Lombardi uses Facebook and YouTube to capture a larger audience and steer it to Drum Channel. "We're building an extensive library for all ages and documenting the legendary drummers for future generations," he says. "We've got lots of great footage of Louie Bellson, Joe Morello, Freddie Gruber, and Buddy Rich, and we want to expose younger generations to these drumming legends."

Drum Channel survives financially as a subscription-based website. Plans can be purchased on a monthly (\$4.95), six-month (\$24.95), or annual (\$49.90) basis. DC also profits from the sale of the DVDs that are recorded in its studio. Some drummers bring their bands in with them and incorporate ensemble footage, so they're also able to sell those performances as DVDs.

Ultimately, Lombardi views Drum Channel as a very affordable monthly online video magazine. He welcomes advertising but suggests that with more subscriptions, outside ads would not be necessary. He projects that with the current growth rate in subscribers, Drum Channel should reach its profit potential by year's end.

"The key to our success," Don insists, "is to simplify the access to our extensive content library so that younger subscribers can quickly find more information. The more subscribers we get, the more exciting content we can offer. We have big plans for the future of Drum Channel. We have the best drummers in the world in one place, and we're working with teachers all around the world. I would like to see the Drum Channel become the most affordable online resource for drummers of every style and age group to tap into for inspiration and education."

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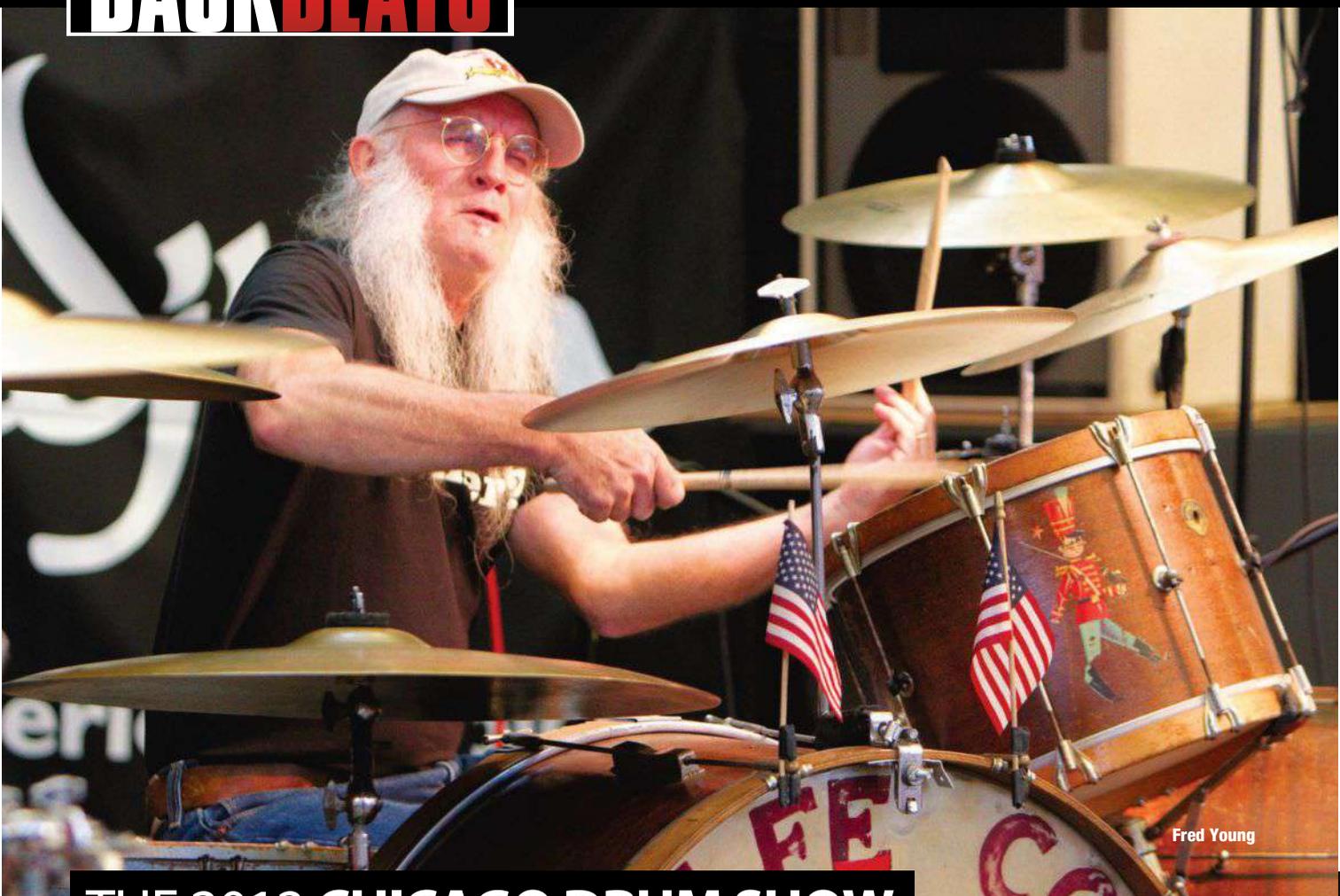
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Fred Young

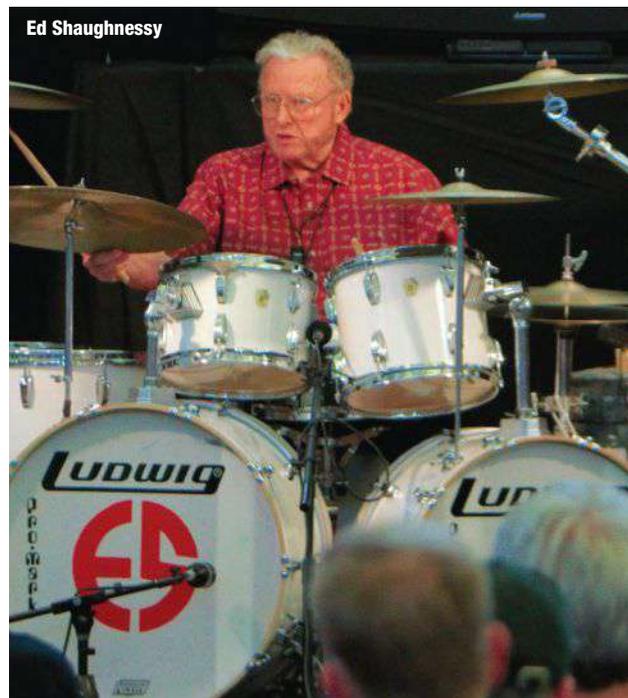
THE 2012 CHICAGO DRUM SHOW

From its humble beginnings in 1990, the Chicago Drum Show has grown into one of the largest events of its kind, attended by drummers, dealers, and collectors from around the world. Part swap meet, part trade show, and part clinic, the event offers something for everyone. This past May 19 and 20, more than a hundred vendors and exhibitors—major manufacturers and smaller custom drum makers alike—packed into the 30,000-square-foot Kane County Fairgrounds. Many beautiful and unique vintage drums were on display, and nearly every hour was filled with raffles, clinics, video presentations, and roundtable discussions.

Legendary *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy provided an entertaining clinic, displaying and explaining his great technique. Other clinicians included jazz drummers Mike Clark and Les DeMerle, marimba artist Jane Boxall, and the Kentucky HeadHunters' Fred Young and his nephew John Fred Young of Black Stone Cherry. Percussion master classes were offered in the second-floor conference room, with Clark, DeMerle, and Boxall as instructors. In the Rebeats Cafe, drummer/author Zoro could be found discussing his philosophies and promoting his new book, *The Big Gig*. There were also panel discussions on various drum history subjects, and Ludwig drumsets from the '60s, especially those in oyster finishes, were in high demand among Japanese and European dealers and collectors.

As the event came to a close, a spring storm was rolling in, and dealers scrambled to load their vehicles for the journey home. But after twenty-two years, the largest vintage drum show on earth is going strong, and many who attended are counting the days until next year.

Text by Mark Cooper
Photos by Michael Hacala



Ed Shaughnessy

IN MEMORIAM

BUDDY SALTZMAN

Drummers who cut their teeth on the music of the 1960s owe a great debt to Buddy Saltzman, one of New York City's premier session men, who passed away this past April 29. Saltzman stands as one of the most recorded drummers of the era, and his no-nonsense, buoyant grooves reigned in the upper regions of the charts throughout the golden age of rock 'n' roll and pop music. His legacy is most significantly crowned by studio work on the lion's share of the Four Seasons canon from 1962 to 1967.

Hilliard "Buddy" Saltzman, born in Bridgeton, New Jersey, on October 17, 1924, was smitten by percussion as a tot. He played on the *Horn and Hardart Children's Hour* radio show at age ten, won third prize in a Gene Krupa contest at the 1939 World's Fair, and went on to study with Henry Adler, Billy Gladstone, and Terry Snyder. Following his discharge from the air force in World War II, Saltzman made the rounds of rehearsals, club dates, and theater gigs, which led to recording sessions.

The '50s found him primarily cutting demos in New York City studios, but by the early '60s Buddy had become a first-call

man, helping to define the sound of the era. He helmed record dates for virtually everyone who recorded in Gotham, including Bob Dylan, Bobby Darin, the Shirelles, the Shangri-Las, Burt Bacharach, the Coasters, Connie Francis, Simon & Garfunkel, the Cowsills, Neil Sedaka, Solomon Burke, Tommy James, the Left Banke, Lesley Gore, Barbra Streisand, and Peter, Paul & Mary. Among his number ones are "The Loco-Motion" by Little Eva, "I'm a Believer" by the Monkees, "Rag Doll" by the Four Seasons, "Sugar, Sugar" by the Archies, and "Lightnin' Strikes" by Lou Christie. And there were countless jingles, soundtracks, and television spots.

Saltzman thrived on a steady diet of three or four sessions a day, five or six days a week. In the congested maelstrom of midtown Manhattan, he wheeled his kit from studio to studio, with taxis occasionally running off with his gear. He was driven to a state of self-described madness, which informed his tough, city-hewn vibe. On the Four Seasons' "Dawn (Go Away)" and "Ronnie," his kit served as a virtual punching bag. "Instead of throwing a plate at somebody, I took it out on the drums!" Buddy said.



Courtesy of George Schowrer

Though jazz was his first love, Saltzman eschewed the *DownBeat* polls in favor of ruling the world of backbeat. But swing he did, on Lena Horne's "He Loves Me," his favorite of his recorded tracks. Frank Sinatra's "My Way" is another number that rose to the top when Buddy recalled his proudest moments in the studio.

"All I ever wanted to do is play drums and provide for my family," Saltzman said. "My forte was that I had a click track in my head, and that's the only reason I made a good living. But you had to have the confidence to know that what you're doing is the best you can do. Or that anybody can do. And nobody can talk you out of it."

Dennis Diken



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KIT
OF
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JUST IN CASE

We've seen some cool suitcase kits over the years, but this one, from Jeff Gada of Waterford, Connecticut, is especially well tricked out. Its centerpiece is a suitcase that Gada's mother-in-law brought to the States from Belgium more than forty years ago and later gave Jeff as a birthday gift. "I started whacking it and noticed it had a very sweet low-end thump," Gada says. "It's the master of all suitcase bass drums, and I play out with it regularly in my band the Nightcrawlers. The suitcase has been reinforced, and mounts and attachments were added for the drum and cymbal hardware."

Gada has all the gear he needs right here—just in miniature. The snare is an 8" Trixon popcorn model, the rack tom is an LP mini timbale, and the floor tom is a vintage 8" CB-700 drum. (When's the last time you saw an 8" floor tom?) The setup is rounded out with 10" Zildjian ZBT/ZHT closed hats, an LP Blast Block, and a 12" Wuhan (or 8" Zildjian K) splash. "Everything that's attached to the case fits inside, making for a quick post-gig getaway," Gada says.

This is actually Gada's second suitcase kit. His first effort used a smaller case and is now played by his kids. "That one started out with just a suitcase as a bass drum with a tambourine attached to the top, which I kicked while playing guitar," says the crafty drummer, who's since built four kits for people who just had to have one. Interested? Hit Jeff up at bsideluggage@yahoo.com.

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to kitofthemonth@modern drummer.com. Show "Kit of the Month" in the subject line of the message.



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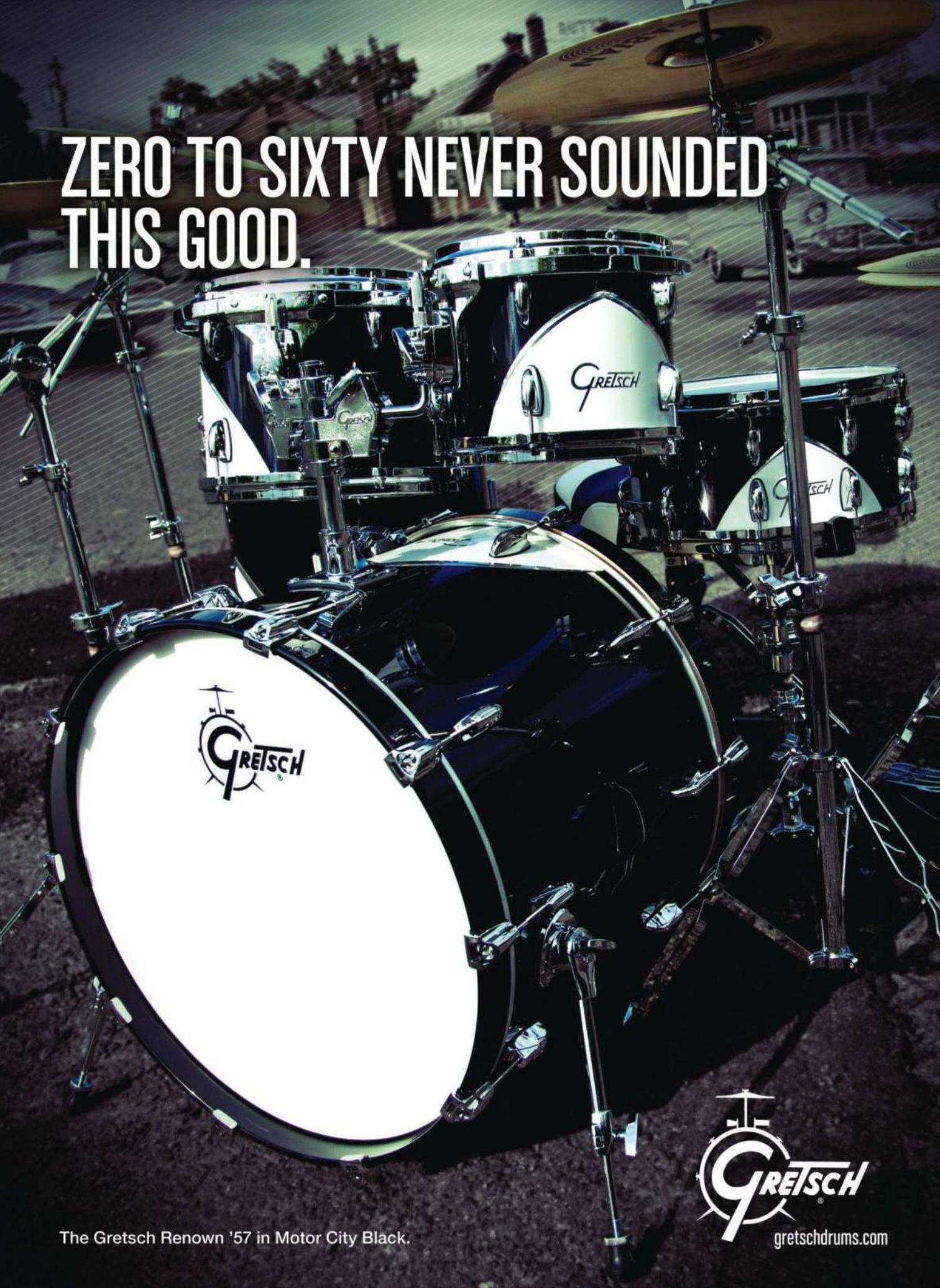
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